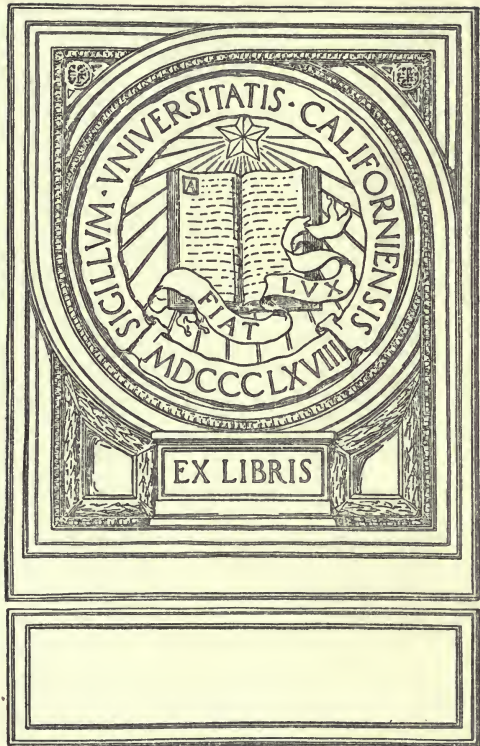


A

Book of Women's Verse

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Women's Verse

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TO
ALICE MEYNELL



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PREFACE

I AM not prepared with any philosophic justification for the compilation of this book. Poetry is poetry, whoever writes it. But it is a fact, at least so far as my observation goes, that people do feel curiosity about women's contributions to the arts, and that this curiosity is common to all kinds of persons, from those who exaggerate the differences between the sexes, to those who seem to think that they can eradicate them. I myself felt this curiosity when I conceived this anthology: and it would be stupid not to admit it.

It is not the first collection of the sort that has been made, but so far as I am aware it has only one predecessor which can be taken seriously and that is over a hundred years old. The principal collections which have come to my notice may be briefly recorded in chronological order.

(1) *Poems by Eminent Ladies*, published in two volumes in 1755 and said to have been edited by Colman and Bonnel Thornton. The preface opens 'These volumes are perhaps the most solid compliment that can possibly be paid the Fair Sex. They are a standing proof that great abilities are not confined to the men, and that genius often glows with equal warmth, and perhaps with more delicacy, in the breast of a female'. The intention was generous, but the 'standing proof' does not stand on these volumes. No research had been done for them, and the eighteen ladies

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represented in them were mainly bad poetastresses of the time. A reprint, with additions, appeared in 1780.

(2) *Specimens of British Poetesses, Selected and Chronologically Arranged* by the Rev. Alexander Dyce (1827), was the earliest product of the right happy and copious industry of that learned man. It is the only book in the list with any pretensions to scholarship, and any man who follows in Dyce's footsteps must be struck both by the range of his research and the judicious manner in which he chose his extracts from the books he found. His work is not beyond criticism. There were poetesses, earlier than himself, whom he missed, of whom Lady Nairne is an outstanding example. He was rather too eager to get in something by any Female versifier whom he discovered, and distinctly over-generous to his own contemporaries. Moreover he gave feminine authorship the benefit of the doubt when the doubt in its favour was very slender. His evidence for the attribution of 'Defiled is my namefull sore' to Anne Boleyn was remarkably slight. There is not much more for the ascription of the celebrated sporting treatises to Juliana Berners. Neither of these reputed poetesses appears in the present volume, for the simple reason that I do not believe in them. Even on his own ground Dyce might have been surpassed by somebody standing on Dyce's shoulders. But had his work been perfect, a hundred years, which have seen the prime of the three greatest of English poetesses, have passed since he published it. I may at this point acknowledge my debt to him, although the poems I have taken from him are very few.

(3) *The Female Poets of Great Britain, chronologically arranged with copious selections and critical remarks* by

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Frederic Rowton, 1848. To this volume, large as it is, no such debt will be acknowledged. Mr. Rowton, on his title page, claims the authorship of other works entitled *The Debater* and *Capital Punishment Reviewed*; if literary piracy were treated as maritime piracy is, one could understand his interest in the death penalty. He was a thief, a hypocrite, a most oily and prolix driveller: a bad specimen of what a modern polemist has called 'the louse on the locks of literature'. This heat against a man long dead may seem excessive; but after all one could not say so much if he were still alive, and his brazenness has probably never been noticed before. Listen to his Preface. 'Of our *male* Poets there are (to say the least of it) histories enough. Johnson, Campbell, Aikin, Anderson, Southey, and others, have done due honour to the genius of the rougher sex; and have left us—so far as they have gone—nothing to be desired. But where are the memorials of the Female mind? . . . One or two small works (among which Mr. Dyce's *Specimens of British Poetesses* is the only one of merit and research) have been devoted to the subject, it is true; but even the worthiest of these productions is at best but incomplete. It cannot surely be pretended that this neglect of our Female Poets is attributable to any lack of genius in the sex. In these enlightened days it may certainly be taken for granted that women have souls . . . we should be deeply ashamed of ourselves for so long withholding from them that prominent place in the world's esteem which is so undoubtedly their due.' What a Chadband! We have here the very accents of that speech about the beasts of the field and the human boy.—'Are you a bird of the air? No!' 'That prominent place in the world's esteem!'

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One might imagine he was talking about some obscure and unnoticed tribe of the brute creation : badgers perhaps, or Dartford warblers. He was for the first time calling the attention of the human race to the existence of women, which could only be demonstrated, apparently, by putting their works into anthologies. But the most notable thing is that like all his kind he was not only a humbug but a sly robber. That patronizing parenthesis about Dyce, without a word of acknowledgment, is the one reference in his preface to a man on whose labours he battered. Half his book—it might be very well if he admitted it, for Dyce was competent—came bodily out of Dyce. That was the only part of it worth printing. Dyce did all his research for him ; the rest of his huge book was filled with the maundering prettinesses of early nineteenth-century writers. His notes on the old poetesses are Dyce's rewritten, often not even that ; that he was conscious of his dishonest intent is proved by the way in which here and there, without any sensible reason, he changes with obtuse cunning the order of the transcribed extracts. He had not even the sense to see that at one place he copied from Dyce a highly ridiculous misprint !

If his earlier notes are certainly pilfered, his later are as certainly his own. Pages of gush are devoted to the numerous geniuses of his time. Of Mrs. Margaret Hodson he says that ' Her narratives flow on as gracefully and smoothly as Scott's : she closely resembles that great writer, indeed, in many respects, although as regards dramatic skill she is certainly superior . . . One cannot but feel surprised that a lady of our peaceful age should be so thoroughly imbued with the martial spirit of our warlike

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ancestors. The fact proves not merely the strength of the human imagination, but also that the imagination is not sexual'. Of Mary Howitt he says that 'As a versifier, as a moralist, and as a philosopher, she may safely challenge comparison with any writer of her own sex and with most of the writers of the other sex . . . Mrs. Howitt is indeed a writer of whom England may be, and will be, eternally proud'. 'There is in Miss Cook', he says, 'that fine eloquence which grows as it advances'. But I may be deemed to have celebrated sufficiently the character of this man and I come to the next.

(4) *Women's Voices* by Mrs. William Sharp, 1887. This is an equally bad compilation in its way, happily a different way. Mrs. Sharp says 'There has not, so far as I am aware, been any anthology formed with the definite aim to represent each of our women-poets by one or more essentially characteristic poems'. She may have been unacquainted with Dyce: at all events she left out half his most interesting things. Her book, terribly dedicated 'To all Women', looks like a feminist manifesto: it is even more than Morton's crowded with the ephemeral productions of contemporaries. They were only, many of them, of the eighties; but they have faded now.

Possibly there are ephemerides in this volume also. But I have done my best to keep them out. My criteria may be briefly explained. From the moderns I have taken only poems which appear to me meritorious; but in the earlier portion of the work there will be found some poems put in merely as curiosities or because they are the best representatives of their time that can be found. I have left out a great

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many of Dyce's poetesses. I could not bring myself to print Diana Primrose, in spite of her lovely name, or the monstrously ingenious Mary Fage, of the seventeenth century though she was. But I may say quite frankly that if I had come across, say, a poem of Chaucer's day indisputably by a woman it would have gone in even though it were the weakest doggerel. But I know nothing as early as that. Professor Gollancz, I believe, thinks *Pearl* was by a woman; perhaps it was, but we don't know. I have omitted, as I said, verse imputed to Juliana Berners and Anne Boleyn. By the same token I have left out *Hardy-Knute*, which may or may not have been by Lady Wardlaw. I do not think it a great loss, for it is long and does not live up to its opening. *There's nae luck* would have gone in had I really felt sure that Jean Adams was a likelier author than Mickle. I should have been glad to have included the beautiful lines attributed to James I's noble and unfortunate daughter, Elizabeth of Bohemia, if I had seen satisfactory evidence for the attribution. Mrs. Tighe's long *Psyche*, a poem of respectable accomplishment, I searched for quotable extracts, finding none; her poem about a lily I rejected after hesitation. I found myself reluctantly disinclined to include anything by Margaret Fuller or George Eliot. Beyond these and a few moderns I do not believe that I had much hesitation.

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There will be found here some authors and some poems which have appeared in no previous anthology of any kind, so far as I know; one or two authors never known, and many who have been forgotten since Dyce dug them up. In all but a very few instances I have procured and searched

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the original volumes even where I have ultimately selected poems which previous anthologists have chosen before me. They do not always, be it understood, choose the worst and leave the best for other people. But good work is not the only thing to which interest attaches, and while looking for poetesses I have come across many odd things. I may be permitted, while the night is yet young, so to speak, to make a few stray remarks about some of them.

There never was a time, whatever Mr. Morton may have supposed, when the Female Sex entirely escaped notice, or even 'esteem'. But there was a time when it took no active share in literature. To-day we scarcely bother about the distinction between men and women writers. With thousands of women writing, with women's verses in every magazine and women reporters in every newspaper office, when literary women congregate in clubs, and robust women novelists haggle with editors and discuss royalties with their male rivals, we take composition for granted as a feminine occupation. Even though we may not expect it we should be only mildly surprised if a female Plato or Shakespeare were to appear, and a second of the sort would cause no surprise at all. But it has all occurred very rapidly; it is less than a hundred years since Southey wrote to Charlotte Brontë 'Literature cannot be the business of a woman's life, and it ought not to be'. Before the days of Fanny Burney and Jane Austen the woman writer was a lonely figure, however different may have been the ways in which various generations regarded her. One looks back through the centuries and sees these poetesses scattered about in ones and twos, fine ladies, quiet countrywomen with taste and education, blue stockings,

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pet prodigies brought up in literary circles, stupid women vain of their accomplishments, timid women apologizing for their temerity; almost all of them inevitably and pathetically self-conscious about the opinion of the watching males around them. Nevertheless the degree of that self-consciousness seems to have varied. There was very little poetry—though we do not know about many beautiful anonymous Elizabethan poems—by women in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. One of them speaks to us direct on the subject: Mary Oxlie or Morpet, who wrote a dedicatory poem to her fellow-countryman Drummond of Hawthornden:

Perfection in a woman's work is rare;
From an untroubled mind should verses flow;
My discontents make mine too muddy show;
And hoarse encumbrances of household care,
Where these remain the Muses ne'er repair.

But it did not, I think, occur to many early poetesses to apologize for writing or appeal for masculine mercy. Those who did write, of course, were mainly aristocrats, and whatever the standards of the rest of the population there has always been a good deal of democracy within the aristocracy, and an element of high culture amongst aristocratic women. Even in the eighteenth century, one of Horace Walpole's lady friends might not have apologized for writing verses as humbler contemporaries of his felt impelled to do. But after the Commonwealth we do commonly find apologies or protestations in text or preface.

The authorized folio of Katherine Philips (Orinda) is very enlightening. I have some doubts as to the literary modesty of Orinda: one sees behind her poems a bouncing

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gushing creature of the kind not usually content to hide their lights under bushels. But she protests enough. The standard edition was published posthumously; there had been in her lifetime a pirated book full of errors which she vehemently repudiated:

‘The injury done me by that Publisher and Printer’, she wrote, ‘exceeds all the troubles that I remember I ever had . . . it is impossible for malice itself to have printed those Rimes (you tell me gotten abroad so impudently) with so much abuse to the things, as the very publication of them at all, though they had been never so correct, had been to me.’ She was ‘that unfortunate person that cannot so much as think in private, that must have my imaginations rifled and exposed to play the Mountebanks, and dance upon the Ropes to entertain all the rabble; to undergo all the raillery of the Wits, and all the severity of the Wise, and to be the sport of some that can, and some that cannot read a Verse . . . it hath cost me a sharp fit of sickness since I heard it . . . a thousand pounds to have bought my permission for their being printed should not have obtained it.’

‘Sometimes’, she says, ‘I think that employment so far above my reach and unfit for my sex, that I am going to resolve against it for ever’, but ‘the truth is, I have an incorrigible inclination to that folly of riming, and, intending the effects of that humour, only for my own amusement in my own life’. Her editor, however, was proud to publish them: ‘Some of them would be no disgrace to the name of any Man that amongst us is most esteemed for his excellency in this kind, and there are none that may not pass with favour, when it is remembered that they fell hastily from the pen but of a Woman. We might well

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have called her the English Sappho.' She would, he says, have been persuaded to publish a correct impression of herself:

But the small Pox, that malicious disease (as knowing how little she would have been concern'd for her handsomeness, when at the best) was not satisfied to be as injurious a Printer of her face, as the other had been of her poems, but treated her with a more fatal cruelty than the Stationer had them; for though he to her most sensible affliction surreptitiously possessed himself of a false Copy, and sent those children of her Fancy into the World, so martyred, that they were more unlike themselves than she could have been made had she escaped; that murderous Tyrant, with greater barbarity seiz'd unexpectedly upon her, the fine Original, and to the much juster affliction of all the world, violently tore her out of it, and hurried her untimely to her grave, upon the 22 of June 1664, she being then but 31 [34] years of age. But he could not bury her in oblivion, for this monument which she erected for herself, will for ever make her to be honoured as the honour of her Sex, the emulation of ours, and the admiration of both.

Comment on the beauties of this last paragraph is beyond me. The commendatory poems prefaced to Orinda's works echo these lofty strains. Lord Orrery wrote:

And as Our Sex resigns to Yours the due,
So all of your bright Sex must yield to You.

Lord Roscommon pictured himself surrounded by lions on some Lybian plain:

The Magick of Orinda's name,
Not only can their fierceness tame,
But, if that mighty word I once rehearse,
They seem submissively to roar in Verse.

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A pseudonymous lady, more vehement than her subject, argued that environment (she didn't know the word) made all the difference between the sexes :

Trained up to Arms, we Amazons have been,
And Spartan Virgins strong as Spartan Men :
Breed Women but as Men, and they are these ;
Whilst Sybarit Men are Women by their eyes.

.
Nature to Females freely doth impart
That, which the Males usurp, a stout, bold heart ;
Thus Hunters female Beasts fear to assail
And female Hawks more mettal'd than the male.

This feminine anticipation of Mr. Kipling is followed by the assertion that since souls were equal it was obviously not the 'he or she' that wrote poetry.

It is a fine collection of tributes. A poem, with noble passages, by the neglected Flatman comes into it, and there are two interesting Odes by Cowley. One begins :

We allow'd you beauty, and we did submit
To all the tyrannies of it.
Ah cruel Sex ! will you depose us too in Wit ?

The other, full of the oddest tropes, states that :

The World did never but two Women know
Who, one by fraud, the other by wit did rise
To the two tops of Spiritual dignities ;
One Female Pope of old, one Female Poet now.

The panegyric was impressive ; but it was all somewhat patronizing, addressed as though to a flying pig. There is an air of strain about Orinda's nearest contemporary rival. The gifted Anne Killigrew, who, dying young, was the

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subject of a great ode by Dryden, had to write a long poem protesting against the 'saying that her verses were made by another':

Like Aesop's painted jay, I seem'd to all,
Adorn'd in plumes, I not my own could call.

She produced Orinda as evidence that women could be good poets, and she said quaintly of Alexander the Great:

Nor will it from his Conquests derogate,
A Female Pen his Acts did celebrate.

There is nothing diffident about the attitude of Aphra Behn, the tough, audacious, fearless young widow who forced her way to dramatic success under the Restoration, and who was the first of our professional women writers. She has been rather unfairly treated by historians. It is true that her plays are as gross, in subject and speech, as any of her time: possibly her coarseness was the defect of the quality which enabled her to fight her lone hand in the Grub Street of the day. But there is a hearty straightforwardness about her which is lacking in some of the men of the Restoration, she had a gift for broad, strong characterization, she was honest, rough, kind, affectionate, not at all cynical, and she wrote English of an Elizabethan lustiness. She did not apologize, she counter-attacked. She was not allowed to forget her sex but she soundly thumped those who reminded her that her plays and poems were 'writ by a woman'. Here is a passage from the *Epistle to the Reader* which introduces *The Dutch Lover*:

Indeed that day 'twas acted first, there comes me into the Pit, a long lither, phlegmatick, white, ill-favour'd wretched Fop, an officer in Masquerade newly transported

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with a Scarf and Feather out of France, a sorry Animal that has nought else to shield it from the uttermost contempt of all Mankind, but that respect which we afford to Rats and Toads, which though we do not well allow to live, yet when considered as parts of God's Creation, we make honourable mention of them. A thing, Reader—but no more of such a Smelt: This thing, I tell ye, opening that which serves it for a mouth, out issued such a noise as this to those that sate about it, that they were to expect a usefull Play, God damn him, for it was a woman's . . . I would not for a world be taken arguing with such a propertie as this; but if I thought there were a man of such tolerable parts, who could upon mature deliberation distinguish well his right hand from his left, and justly state the difference between the number of sixteen and two, yet had this prejudice upon him; I would take a little pains to make him know how much he errs. For waving the examination why women having equal education with men, were not as capable of knowledge, of whatsoever sort as well as they: I'll only say as I have to such and before, that Plays have no great room for that which is men's great advantage over women, that is Learning; we all know that the immortal Shakespeare's Plays (who was not guilty of much more of this than often falls to women's share) have better pleas'd the World than Johnson's works, though by the way 'tis said the Benjamin was no such Rabbi neither, for I am inform'd that his Learning was but Grammar high (sufficient indeed to rob poor Salust of his best orations); and it hath been observ'd that they are apt to admire him most confoundedly, who have just such a scantling of it as he had. . . . Then for their musty rules of Unity, and God knows what besides, if they meant anything, they are enough intelligible and as practicable by a woman.

This was in 1673. Forty years afterwards we get a sidelight from the preface to Mary Monk's poems, written after

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her death by her father Lord Molesworth. The preface takes the form of a dedication (fifty pages) to Carolina, Princess of Wales, who is greeted with this ambiguous salutation: 'The true value, you have for Liberty, is so remarkable, that one wou'd wonder where your Royal Highness (who has been bred up in a part of Europe, but slenderly furnish'd with just notions of that great Blessing) cou'd have acquired it'. Lord Molesworth repeats with approval charges recently made against women—this was two hundred years ago and on the verge of the eighteenth century!

That the Natural Sweetness and Modesty which so well became their Sex, and so much recommended them to the Love and Esteem of the Men is (by many) exchanged for a Careless Indecent, Masculine Air [imitating] the Rakeish, Milder sort of Gentlemen in the Excess in Love of Gaming, Snuff-Taking, Habit, and a Modish Neglect of their Husbands, Children and Families.

As for his daughter's verses, of the tone of which he is proud, he says affectingly:

We found most of them in her Scrittore after her death, written with her own Hand, little expecting, and as little desiring, the Publick shou'd have any Opportunity of either Applauding or Condemning them.

It might be possible to find some women writers of the age to whom Lord Molesworth's strictures might be held, in part, to apply: Mrs. Centlivre, De la Rivière Manly, and Lady Mary Montagu. But it gives us a shock to hear them applied to the generality of early Georgian women, and they certainly would not apply to the poetesses (with whom we are specially concerned) of the rest of the

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century. Most of them were extremely severe and models of propriety, proud to display what learning they really had, but studious to exhibit a decorous modesty about publication.

The first edition (1696) of the poems of Philomela (Mrs. Elizabeth Singer Rowe) was published pseudonymously: her 'Name had been prefixed, had not her own Modesty absolutely forbidden it'. The preface was written (from Harding's Rents) by Elizabeth Johnson, who stoutly defended her sex:

We are not unwilling to allow Mankind the Brutal Advantages of Strength, they are Superior to ours in Force, they have Custom on their Side, and have Ruled, and are like to do so; and may freely do it without Disturbance or Envy; at least they should have none from us, if they could keep quiet among themselves. But when they would Monopolize Sense too, when neither that, nor Learning, nor so much as Wit must be allow'd us, but all over-ruled by the Tyranny of the Prouder Sex; nay when some of them will not let us say our Souls are our own, but would persuade us we are no more Reasonable Creatures than themselves, or their Fellow-Animals; we then must ask their Pardons if we are not yet so Compleatly Passive as to bear all without so much as a Murmur: We complain, and we think with Reason, that our Fundamental Constitutions are Destroyed; that here is a plain and open Design to render us mere Slaves, perfect Turkish Wives, without Properties or Sense or Souls; and are forced to Protest against it, and Appeal to all the World, whether these are not notorious Violations on the Liberties of Freeborn Englishwomen? This makes the meekest Worm amongst us all, ready to turn again when we are thus trampled on; But alas! What can we do to Right ourselves? Stingless and Harmless as we are, we can only Kiss the Foot that hurts us. However, sometimes it pleases

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Heaven to raise up some Brighter Genius than ordinary to Succour a Distressed People; an Epaminondas in Thebes; a Timoleon for Corinth; (for you must know we read Plutarch, now he is translated) and a Nassau for all the World: Nor is our Defenceless Sex forgotten! we have not only Bonducas and Zenobias; but Saphos and Daciers; Schurmans, Orindas and Behns, who have humbled the most haughty of our Antagonists, and made them do Homage to our Wit as well as to our Beauty.

Forty years passed before her poems were reprinted by Curll with a note from the author desiring him 'to own, that it's his Partiality to my Writings, not my Vanity, which has occasioned the Re-publishing of them'. Curll himself wrote the preface, telling the story of Mrs. Rowe's life and marriage in the strain of 'Long had this Lady been the Wish and Hope of many desiring Swains'. He addressed himself to Pope; said that Prior had praised Philomela; and quoted Dr. Watts as saying that 'the Honour of Poetry is retrieved by such Writers, from the Scandal which has been cast upon it, by the Abuse of Verse to loose and profane Purposes'. Philomela's diffident reserve was the common thing. Mary Jones, one of the best known, a friend of Dr. Johnson and author of verses respectably polished and pointed, prefaced her fat volume with the apologetic statement that her poems were 'the product of pure nature only, and most of them wrote at a very early age'. She had for long shrunk from publication out of respect for 'them [her friends], the world and myself' and only resorted to it at last (under the patronage of the Dutch Stadtholder) in order to raise money for an aged and indigent relative. She must have raised a good deal: her subscription list (Christopher Smart and Horace Walpole

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appear in it) is a huge one. Her opening lines are unpromising :

How much of paper's spoil'd, what floods of ink !
And yet how few, how very few can think.

But the rest of the poem (printed in this volume) is amusing and explains her pretty well. Her reluctance to set out a dedication

With lies enough to make a lord asham'd !

was not shared by her contemporary Mary Masters, whose verses (alleged to have been corrected by Dr. Johnson) were dedicated to the Earl of Burlington. She prostrates herself in the most approved Grub Street mode. He is exalted ; she lowly and untuneful :

Yet when a *British Peer* has deign'd to shed
His gen'rous favours on my worthless Head ;
Silent shall I receive the welcome Boon ?

Boon indeed :

He spoke ; he prais'd, I hearken'd with delight
And found a strong Propensity to write.

The humility of the women authors and the implied condescension of the men were at their acutest during the eighteenth century. Poetesses, however, were far more numerous than before. There were (though Scotswomen wrote some immortal songs) no very notable ones ; and the spread of authorship did not greatly affect women of the upper classes. Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, was an exception : but her salutation to the Alps will certainly not be reprinted by me. The cultivated relatives of dons and clergymen, widows driven to a subscription for a living, elderly spinsters, aspiring housekeepers and governesses

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composed and published volumes of respectable couplets. Now and then a considerable financial success was made. Mrs. Barber, the pushing widow of a Dublin tradesman, published in 1733 a handsome, even luxurious quarto, which is still very common. The most noticeable thing in the book is the prefatory poem by Constantia Grierson : 'To Mrs. Mary Barber, under the name of Sapphira, occasioned by the encouragement she met with in England to publish her poems by subscription'.

Provincial ladies began to have volumes locally printed, and talent by poverty depressed was studiously unearthed. Mary Leapor, who had a strain of genius, was a domestic servant. Stephen Duck, the inspired Thresher, had his analogue, though not his equal, in Mrs. Yearsley, the Bristol Charwoman. This woman ought to be remembered for the most astounding apostrophe on record. She addressed a poem to the Bristol Channel in which she broke forth with

Hail ! useful Channel . . .

The phrase, unique as it is, was significant of the age. It might be used as a text for that prevailing (though, of course, not universal) complacency of the middle Georgians, who often seemed to regard the Universe as a laudably well-meaning branch of the lower orders, and were quite capable of 'Hail, gamesome Thunder' and 'Hail, pleasing Lightning'. For prosiness and bathos Mrs. Yearsley was surpassed by another lady whose work will not be found on succeeding pages. This was Miss Jane Cave, whose *Poems on Various Subjects, Entertaining, Elegiac and Religious* were printed at Winchester in 1783, with a remarkable frontispiece showing the author quill

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in hand and wearing a sort of beribboned tea-cosy on top of a towering coiffure. Her volume is dedicated to the Subscribers: 'Ye gen'rous patrons of a female muse.' And with some reason. There were nearly two thousand of them, grouped by localities, 'Oxford', 'Southampton', 'Bath', &c. She, or the family which employed her in some unnamed capacity, must have systematically scoured the South of England for victims. Her character was evidently forcible, if unattractive; but her powers did not justify her evident self-complacency. She was especially fond of writing obituary poems on deceased clergymen. Here are characteristic extracts from two of these:

Hark! how the Heav'nly Choir began to sing,
A song of praise, when *Watkins* entered in.

Let ev'ry heart lift up a fervent pray'r,
That old Elijah's mantle may be there,
That God from age to age may carry on
The amazing work which *Harris* hath begun.

In her dedication she disclaims any pretension to be a 'Seward, Steele, or Moore'. The list is a sign of the times. Well-known poetesses now existed in large numbers, and as the century drew to a close both their fame and the claims to eminence of the best of them steadily increased. There was Helen Maria Williams, whose *Ode on the Peace*, competently written but now unreadable, was highly praised by Dr. Johnson, and one of whose sonnets was committed to heart by Wordsworth. There was Elizabeth Carter, translator of Epictetus, and a blue-stocking whose learning really commanded respect. There was Charlotte Smith, the sonneteer, in whose writing we can

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still find the vigour and grace that made her celebrated in her own day. Anna Seward was equally well known. She did not deserve it. Occasionally there is a faint trace of reality in her work, as in the Sonnet on a December morning, 1782 :

I love to rise ere gleams the tardy light,
Winter's pale dawn ;—and as warm fires illume
And cheerful tapers shine around the room,
Thro' misty windows bend my musing sight,
Where, round the dusky lawn, the mansion white
With shutters clos'd, peers faintly thro' the gloom,
That slow recedes ;

But most of it is very bad ; and I have not considered it necessary to drag her into this book merely because she was once taken seriously. Mrs. Opie, wife of the painter and author of *The Blind Boy*, was another celebrity. Her *Lines Respectfully Inscribed to the Society for the Relief of Persons Imprisoned for Small Debts* are so characteristic of the time that I wish I had space for them.

There were others even better known. Something of the old strangeness still clung to the woman who wrote. Anna Seward was the Swan of Lichfield and Susanna Blamire the Muse of Cumberland. But the age that produced poets and dramatists of the status and popularity of Mrs. Barbauld, Hannah More and Joanna Baillie—the last a poetess of really considerable talents—was becoming reconciled. For a time the Mrs. Radcliffes might prefer to sign their works whilst the Jane Austens remained anonymous ; but with the end of the epoch the old air of peculiarity faded, and with the century of the Romantic Revival came an innumerable host of women writers of some distinction, and three poetesses with claims to rank

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with all but the greatest men. After Mrs. Browning, Christina Rossetti, and Emily Brontë we hear no more, and could hear no more, of 'a Female Muse'.

.

That these three were greater poets than any Englishwomen before them goes, I imagine, without saying. Almost all their best predecessors were women who live by one or two poems. Amongst those poems scarcely one is a genuine classic beyond the extraordinary group of great songs written in the eighteenth century by Scotswomen, who seemed to have led more independent lives than the Englishwomen of their time, and certainly sang more boldly, confidently, and musically: the *Werena my Heart's Licht* of Lady Grisel Baillie, Mrs. Cockburn's *The Flowers of the Forest* and Jane Elliot's, the stirring lilts of Isobel Pagan the Ayrshire publican, Lady Anne Barnard's *Auld Robin Gray*, and *The Land of the Leal* of Lady Nairne.

Until the age of Joanna Baillie, the Matchless Orinda had the greatest repute of them all, but there is more substantial achievement in the work of Lady Winchilsea. The Countess had no fame in her lifetime, she did not (as Orinda did) correspond with the literary men or exchange tributes with the poets of her time. But it was not for nothing that Wordsworth 'discovered' and valued her. She kept her eye on Nature at a time when the world in general had a conventional *parti pris* about nature, and an impressive power comes with her speech. This slight 'difference' in her is not peculiar to her.

It may be left to others to discuss the particular aggregate value and characteristics of our women poets, to debate the question as to whether the 'masculine imagination' of Emily Brontë was a freak, to look for especially

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'feminine' characteristics in the contents of this anthology. They are difficult and subtle questions. But I will call attention to one point, and one only: and that is rather to the credit of the poetesses. That they have, and must have, conformed to succeeding fashions in writing is obvious—the poetic style of an age is a fruit of its general civilization and way of thinking. But there is, I think, evidence that when the convention favours highly regularized speech and restricted choice of image, and when the convention favours a repression of personality, women seem to be less prone than men to complete conformity. Women from 1680 to 1750 may have written obediently in couplets or quatrains, but in those of them who have any merit, personal experience and personal passion are always peeping through, and the smooth surface of the stock diction is always being broken by an unexpected word, betraying obstinately individual taste and observation. Lady Winchelsea's cropping horse in the night has often been quoted. But we are equally surprised to encounter the hot passion, the straightforward confessions of suffering, the open autobiography that are exposed in the poems, however technically imperfect, of Ephelia and Lady Wharton. Mary Mollineux's verses¹ (5th edition 1761)

¹ They were published by her husband, with prefatory notices by him, by her cousin Frances Owen, and by one Tryal Ryder. She was a saint and a scholar, wrote Horatian Latin lyrics on religious subjects, and suffered imprisonment for her faith in company with her husband. I cannot forbear quoting from his account of her death: 'The next Morning, about the ninth Hour, I again thought she had been departing; but after a little Time, somewhat recovering her Breath, and seeing me express, to Friends that were present, something of my Concern for her, she said to me *Ne nimis sollicitus esto*; that is, in English, *Be not*

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were read, no doubt by her fellow Quakers, for generations after her death, but have never, so far as I know, been noticed by any critic.

Mary Mollineux the Quaker died (under fifty) in 1695. She had suffered in prison, and her religious poems—*Meditation* and *Contemplation*, though not those on Nadab and Abihu, might almost have been added to the extracts in this book—are the work of a woman who, although very learned, was primarily concerned with the feelings she was registering. Totally indifferent to the manner of the time, she was strongly under the influence of Donne. Mary Leapor and Mary Masters again illustrate the refusal of even the lesser women to remain on the highest levels of masculine stiffness. The detectives who are always chasing, farther and farther back, into the Augustan Age for ‘heralds of Naturalism’, scraps of really fresh and enthusiastic description of Nature, could find things in both these poetesses. Mary Leapor (a domestic servant who died of measles at 24 after teaching herself to write some very polished verse) looked at Nature directly and keenly. A mere list of things she mentions (*d.* 1746) astonishes the reader accustomed, in the minor poets, to nothing more *thou overmuch careful, or troubled*; which Advice took Impression in my Heart: And that was the last Latin Sentence that she spake, that I know of, and she never spake in Latin, in this Illness, that I remember except when Company was present, that she would speak only to me: A little after, most of the Company being gone out, I asked her, How she was? She answered, *Drawing nearer and nearer*. And many sweet and loving Sentences she spake to me that Day, and the Day next after; but afterwards was scarcely able to answer to any Question, but continued mostly sleeping as it were, sweetly and quietly: And on the third Day of the Eleventh Month, 1695, in the Evening, she departed without the least Sigh or Groan.’

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than groves, enamelled meads, bursting grapes, roses and lilies. If you turn Mary Leapor's pages you will find kingcups, goldfinches, linnets, thyme, shining cottage tables, primroses, damsons, poppies . . . And how, in this passage of Mary Masters, a knowledge of and love for the country struggles with the hoops and corsets of the mode :

Here the green Wheat disposed in even Rows
(A pleasing view) on genial Ridges grows,
Its clustered heads on lofty Spires ascend,
And frequent with delightful wavings bend,
There younger Barley shoots a tender Blade,
And spreads a level plain with verdant Shade.
The wreathing Pea extends its bloomy Pride,
And flow'ry Borders smile on either side.

She says, in terms, that whenever she looks at the country it produces an excitement in her which makes her write verse : unfortunately her intelligence was too weak, and only a few lines (not about Nature) were found pointed enough for a representative selection. But she had that touch of informality, and I think that even in the obscurest and worst women poets of the time will almost always be found — what in the men's work is only sometimes to be found — expressions of personal joy and grief, the healthy instinct to write about the things that the writer most intensely feels.

.
As for the text, there are a few poems which I have cut. Two of Lady Chudleigh's are cut and one of Katherine Philips's, two by Mary Masters and the second of Mary Mollineux's. The first poem from Lady Mary Montagu is compressed, and Fanny Greville's *Indifference* and Mrs. Hemans's *Dirge* are truncated as they are in Sir A. Quiller-Couch's *Oxford Book of English Verse*. I have

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modernized the spelling and typography of most of the older poems, but have here and there kept it because I didn't like the look of some poems when I had modernized them.

There are, finally, a few problems to be cleared up on which I should be glad of light. The identity of Fanny Greville, whose *Indifference* is one of the most poignant lyrics of the eighteenth century, has always baffled historians. Who was Mrs. Taylor who appeared in Dryden's *Miscellany* and also in Mrs. Behn's *Miscellany* of 1683? Who was *Ephelia*, first given her due in a charming essay by Mr. Gosse? There were two editions of her poems. The first of 1679 is complete, the edition of 1682 being padded out with poems, mostly good, by Rochester and others, including even *Come Lasses and Lads*. A question of even more interest to me personally is, who was Ann Collins? and one of more interest still, where are Ann Collins's poems? Her *Song* I found in Dyce (I recommend the reader to refer to it, remembering its date) and the other poem I got out of a forgotten but good anthology of religious verse compiled by James Montgomery. Dyce refers to her *Divine Songs and Meditations* (1653). Lowndes's *Bibliographer's Manual* states that the copy of the first edition sold at the Sykes and Heber Sales a century ago was said to be unique; but he records also an edition of 1658. I can find no further information, and neither edition is in the British Museum. I should be glad of light on this and also on the other compositions of Mary Oxlie, the friend of Drummond of Hawthornden.

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Mrs. Tynan Hinkson, Mrs. Violet Jacob, Miss Macaulay, and Mrs. Meynell: to Messrs. Wm. Blackwood & Sons (Moirá O'Neill, *Songs of the Glens of Antrim*); Mr. R. Cobden-Sanderson (Sylvia Lynd); Mr. John Lane (Mrs. Woods); the Hon. Frederick Lawless and Sir Issac Pitman & Sons (Emily Lawless); Messrs. Macmillan & Co. (three copyright poems by Christina Rossetti); Sir Henry Newbolt and Mr. Elkin Mathews (Mary Coleridge); Mr. John Murray and Mr. A. C. Benson (two copyright poems by Charlotte Brontë); Mr. Clement Shorter (Dora Sigerson Shorter, and one copyright poem by Emily Brontë); Messrs. Sidgwick & Jackson (Miss Macaulay); Mr. T. Fisher Unwin (Amy Levy, *A London Plane Tree*).

With this I may conclude the preface to a work which has occupied much of my spare time for seven years. I may echo the words of Dyce in his preface of 1827: 'The inglorious toils of compilation seldom excite the gratitude of readers, who only require to be amused, and are indifferent as to what passed behind the scenes in the preparation of their entertainment: but we feel an honest satisfaction in the reflection, that our tedious chase through the Jungles of forgotten literature must procure to this undertaking the good-will of our countrywomen'.

Only that 'must' looks rather strong.

J. C. SQUIRE.

ANNE ASKEWE

c. 1520-1546 (martyred)

1. *The Balade whych Anne Askewe made
and sange when she was in Newgate*

LYKE as the armed knyght
Appoynted to the fiede,
With thys world wyll I fyght,
And fayth shall be my shielde.

Faythe is that weapon stronge
Whych wyll not fayle at nede;
My foes therfor amonge
Therwith wyll I procede.

As it is had in strengthe
And force of Christes waye,
It wyll prevayle at lengthe,
Though all the devyls saye naye.

Faythe in the fathers olde
Obtayned ryghtwysnesse,
Whych make me verye bolde
To feare no worldes dystresse.

I now rejoyce in hart,
And hope byd me do so,
For Christ wyll take my part,
And ease me of my wo.

ANNE ASKEWE

Thu sayst, Lorde, whoso knocke,
To them wylt thou attende ;
Undo therfor the locke,
And thy stronge power sende.

More enmyes now I have
Than heeres upon my heed ;
Lete them not me deprave,
But fyght thou in my steed.

On the my care I cast,
For all their cruell spyght,
I sett not by their hast,
For thou art my delyght.

I am not she that lyst
My anker to lete fall,
For everye dryslynge myst,
My shyppe substancyall.

Not oft use I to wryght
In prose nor yet in ryme,
Yet wyll I shewe one syght
That I sawe in my tyme.

I saw a ryall trone
Where Justyce shuld have sytt,
But in her stede was one
Of modye cruell wytt.

Absorpt was ryghtwysnesse
As of the ragynge floude ;
Sathan in hys excesse
Sucte up the gyltesse bloude.

ANNE ASKEWE

Then thought I, Jesus, Lorde,
Whan thee shalt judge us all,
Harde is it to recorde
On these men what wyll fall.

Yet, Lorde, I the desyre,
For that they do to me :
Lete them not taste the hyre
Of their inyquyte.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

1533-1603

2. *On Her Enemies*

THE doubt of future foes, exiles my present joy,
And wit me warnes to shun such snares as threaten
mine annoy.

For falshood now doth flow, and subject faith doth ebbe,
Which would not be, if reason rul'd or wisdom wev'd
the webbe.

But clowdes of tois untried, do cloake aspiring mindes,
Which turne to raigne of late repent, by course of changed
windes.

The toppe of hope supposed, the roote of ruth will be,
And frutelessé all their graffed guiles, as shortly ye shall see.
Then dazeld eyes with pride, which great ambition blinds,
Shal be unseeld by worthy wights, whose foresight fals-
hood finds,

The daughter of debate, that eke discord doth sowe
Shall reap no gaine where former rule hath taught still
peace to growe.

QUEEN ELIZABETH

No forreine banisht wight shall ancre in this port,
Our realme it brookes no strangers force, let them elsewhere resort.

Our rusty sword with rest, shall first his edge employ,
To polle their toppes that seeke such change and gape for joye.

3. *Answer to a Popish Priest, Giving Her Opinion on the Corporeal Presence*

CHRIST was the Word that spake it;
He took the bread, and brake it:
And what that Word did make it,
That I believe, and take it.

LADY ELIZABETH CAREW

4. *Chorus from 'Mariam'*

fl. 1613

'TIS not enough for one that is a wife
To keep her spotless from an act of ill;
But from suspicion she should free her life,
And bare herself of power as well as will.
'Tis not so glorious for her to be free,
As by her proper self restrain'd to be.

When she hath spacious ground to walk upon,

Why on the ridge should she desire to go?

It is no glory to forbear alone

. Those things that may her honour overthrow:

But 'tis thankworthy, if she will not take

All lawful liberties for honour's sake.

LADY ELIZABETH CAREW

That wife her hand against her fame doth rear,
That more than to her lord alone will give
A private word to any second ear ;

And though she may with reputation live,
Yet tho' most chaste, she doth her glory blot,
And wounds her honour, tho' she kills it not.

When to their husbands they themselves do bind,
Do they not wholly give themselves away?
Or give they but their body, not their mind,
Reserving that, tho' best, for others' prey?
No, sure, their thought no more can be their own,
And therefore should to none but one be known.

Then she usurps upon another's right,
That seeks to be by public language grac'd ;
And tho' her thoughts reflect with purest light
Her mind, if not peculiar, is not chaste.
For in a wife it is no worse to find
A common body, than a common mind.

MARY OXLIE OF MORPET

Early 17th cent.

5. *To William Drummond of Hawthornden,*

I NEVER rested on the Muses bed,
Nor dipt my quill in the Thessalian fountaine,
My rustick Muse was rudely fostered,
And flies too low to reach the double mountaine.

Then do not sparkes with your bright Suns compare,
Perfection in a Womans work is rare ;
From an untroubled mind should verses flow ;
My discontents make mine too muddy show ;

MARY OXLIE OF MORPET

And hoarse encumbrances of houshold care;
Where these remaine, the Muses ne'er repaire.

If thou dost extoll her haire,
Or her ivory forehead faire,
Or those Stars whose bright reflection
Thralls thy heart in sweet subjection :
Or when to display thou seeks
The snow-mixt roses in her cheekes,
Or those rubies soft and sweet,
Over those pretty rows that meet :
The Chian painter as asham'd
Hides his picture so far fam'd;
And the Queen he carv'd it by,
With a blush her face doth dye,
Since those lines do limne a creature
That so far surpast her feature.
When thou shew'st how fairest Flora
Prankt with pride the banks of Ora,
So thy verse her streames doth honour,
Strangers grow enamoured on her,
All the swans that swim in Po
Would their native brooks forgo,
And, as loathing Phoebus beams,
Long to bath in cooler streames.
Tree-turn'd Daphne would be seen
In her groves to flourish green,
And her boughs would gladly spare
To frame a garland for thy haire,
That fairest Nymphs with finest fingers
May thee crown the best of singers.

MARY OXLIE OF MORPET

But when thy Muse dissolv'd in show'rs,
Wailes that peerlesse Prince of ours,
Cropt by too untimely Fate,
Her mourning doth exasperate
Senselesse things to see thee moane,
Stones do weep, and trees do groane,
Birds in aire, fishes in flood,
Beasts in field forsake their food ;
The Nymphs forgoing all their bow'rs
Teare their chaplets deckt with flow'rs ;
Sol himselfe with misty vapor
Hides from earth his glorious taper,
And as mov'd to heare thee plaine
Shews his grieve in show'rs of raine.

LADY MARY WROTH

c. 1620

6.

Song

LOVE, a child, is ever crying ;
Please him, and he straight is flying ;
Give him, he the more is craving,
Never satisfied with having.

His desires have no measure ;
Endless folly is his treasure ;
What he promiseth he breaketh ;
Trust not one word that he speaketh.

He vows nothing but false matter ;
And to cozen you will flatter ;
Let him gain the hand, he'll leave you
And still glory to deceive you.

LADY MARY WROTH

He will triumph in your wailing ;
And yet cause be of your failing :
These his virtues are, and slighter
Are his gifts, his favours lighter.

Feathers are as firm in staying ;
Wolves no fiercer in their preying ;
As a child then, leave him crying ;
Nor seek him so given to flying.

ANNE BRADSTREET

1612-1672

7. *Dedication : 'To My Dear Children'*

THIS Book by Any yet unread,
I leave for you when I am dead,
That, being gone, here you may find
What was your liveing mother's mind.
Make use of what I leave in Love
And God shall blesse you from above.

8. *Epitaph for Queen Elizabeth*

HERE sleeps the Queen ; this is the royal bed,
O' th' damask rose, sprung from the white and red,
Whose sweet perfume fills the all-filling air,
This Rose is wither'd, once so lovely fair ;
On neither tree did grow such rose before,
The greater was our gain, our loss the more.

MARGARET, DUCHESS OF NEWCASTLE

1624-1674

9. *Love and Poetry*

LOVE, how thou art tired out with rhyme !
Thou art a tree whereon all poets clime ;
And from thy branches every one takes some
Of thy sweet fruit, which Fancy feeds upon.
But now thy tree is left so bare and poor,
That they can scarcely gather one plumb more.

ANONYMOUS

1652

10. *To My Husband*

WHEN from the world I shall be ta'en,
And from earth's necessary pain,
Then let no blacks be worn for me,
Not in a ring, my dear, by thee.
But this bright diamond, let it be
Worn in remembrance of me.
And when it sparkles in your eye,
Think 'tis my shadow passeth by.
For why, more bright you shall me see,
Than that or any gem can be.
Dress not the house with sable weed,
As if there were some dismal deed

ANONYMOUS

Acted to be when I am gone,
There is no cause for me to mourn.
And let no badge of herald be
The sign of my antiquity.
It was my glory I did spring
From heaven's eternal powerful King :
To his bright palace heir am I,
It is his promise, he'll not lie.
By my dear brother pray lay me,
It was a promise made by thee,
And now I must bid thee adieu,
For I'm a parting now from you.

ANN COLLINS

c. 1650

11.

Song

THE Winter being over,
In order comes the Spring,
Which doth green herbs discover,
And cause the birds to sing.
The night also expired,
Then comes the morning bright,
Which is so much desired
By all that love the light.
This may learn
Them that mourn,
To put their grief to flight :
The Spring succeedeth Winter,
And day must follow night.

ANN COLLINS

He therefore that sustaineth
Affliction or distress,
Which every member paineth,
And findeth no release :
Let such therefore despair not,
But on firm hope depend,
Whose griefs immortal are not,
And therefore must have end.
They that faint
With complaint
Therefore are to blame :
They add to their afflictions,
And amplify the same.

12.

The Soul's Home

SUCH is the force of each created thing
That it no solid happiness can bring,
Which to our minds can give contentment sound ;
For, like as Noah's dove no succour found,
Till she return'd to him that sent her out,
Just so, the soul in vain may seek about
For rest or satisfaction any where,
Save in his presence who hath sent her here ;
Yea though all earthly glories should unite
Their pomp and splendour to give such delight,
Yet could they no more sound contentment bring
Than star-light can make grass or flowers spring.

KATHERINE PHILIPS (*ORINDA*)

1631-1664

13. *To my Excellent Lucasia, on our
Friendship*

I DID not live until this time
Crown'd my felicity,
When I could say without a crime,
I am not thine, but thee.

This carcass breath'd, and walkt, and slept,
So that the world believ'd
There was a soul the motions kept ;
But they were all deceiv'd.

For as a watch by art is wound
To motion, such was mine :
But never had Orinda found
A soul till she found thine ;

Which now inspires, cures and supplies,
And guides my darkned breast :
For thou art all that I can prize,
My joy, my life, my rest.

No bridegroom's nor crown-conqueror's mirth
To mine compar'd can be :
They have but pieces of the earth,
I've all the world in thee.

Then let our flames still light and shine,
And no false fear controul,
As innocent as our design,
Immortal as our soul.

KATHERINE PHILIPS

14.

A Reverie

DEATH is a leveller ; beauty and kings,
And conquerours, and all those glorious things,
Are tumbled to their graves in one rude heap,
Like common dust as quiet and as cheap.
At greater changes who would wonder then,
Since Kingdoms have their fates as well as men ?
They must fall sick and die ; nothing can be
In this world certain, but uncertainty.
Since power and greatness are such slippery things,
Who'd pity cottages or envy Kings ?
Now least of all, when, weary of deceit,
The world no longer flatters with the great.
Though such confusions here below we find,
As Providence were wanton with mankind :
Yet in this chaos some things do send forth
(Like jewels in the dark) a native worth.
He that derives his high nobility
Not from the mention of a pedigree ;
Who scorns to boast the glories of his blood,
And thinks he can't be great that is not good ;
Who knows the world, and what we pleasure call,
Yet cannot sell one conscience for them all ;
Who hates to hoard that gold with an excuse,
For which he can find out a nobler use ;
Who dares not keep that life that he can spend,
To serve his God, his country and his friend ;

KATHERINE PHILIPS

Who flattery and falsehood doth so hate,
He would not buy ten lives at such a rate;
Whose soul, then diamonds more rich and clear,
Naked and open as his face doth wear,
Who dares be good alone in such a time,
When vertue's held and punish'd as a crime ;
Who thinks dark crooked plots a mean defence,
And is both safe and wise in innocence ;
Who dares both fight and die, but dares not fear ;
Whose only doubt is, if his cause be clear ;
Whose courage and his justice equal worn,
Can dangers grapple, overcome and scorn,
Yet not insult upon a conquer'd foe,
But can forgive him and oblige him too ;
Whose friendship is congenial with his soul,
Who where he gives a heart bestows it whole ;
Whose other ties and titles here do end,
Or buried or completed in the friend ;
Who ne'er resumes the soul he once did give,
While his friend's honesty or honour live ;
And if his friend's content would cost the price,
Would count himself a happy sacrifice ;
Who from the top of his prosperities
Can take a fall, and yet without surprize ;
Who with the same august and even state
Can entertain the best and worst of fate ;
Whose suffering's sweet, if honour once adorn it ;
Who slights revenge, yet does not fear, but scorn it ;
Whose happiness in ev'ry fortune lives,
For that no fortune either takes or gives ;
Who no unhandsome ways can bribe his fate,
Nay, out of prison marches through the gate ;

KATHERINE PHILIPS

Who, losing all his titles and his pelf,
Nay, all the world, can never lose himself ;
This person shines indeed, and he that can
Be vertuous is the great immortal man.

15. *Orinda to Lucasia*

OBSERVE the weary birds ere night be done,
How they would fain call up the tardy sun,
With feathers hung with dew,
And trembling voices too.

They court their glorious planet to appear,
That they may find recruits of spirits there.

The drooping flowers hang their heads,
And languish down into their beds ;

While brooks more bold and fierce than they
Wanting those beams, from whence
All things drink influence,
Openly murmur and demand the day.

Thou my Lucasia are far more to me,
Than he to all the under-world can be ;
From thee I've heat and light,
Thy absence makes my night.

But ah ! my friend, it now grows very long,
The sadness weighty, and the darkness strong :

My tears (its dew) dwell on my cheeks,
And still my heart thy dawning seeks,
And to thee mournfully it cries,
That if too long I wait,
Ev'n thou may'st come too late,
And not restore my life, but close my eyes.

KATHERINE PHILIPS

16. *An Answer to another persuading
a Lady to Marriage*

FORBEAR, bold youth, all's Heaven here,
And what you do aver,
To others, courtship may appear,
'Tis sacrilege to her.

She is a publick deity,
And were't not very odd
She should depose her self to be
A petty household god?

First make the sun in private shine,
And bid the world adieu,
That so he may his beams confine
In complement to you.

But if of that you do despair,
Think how you did amiss,
To strive to fix her beams which are
More bright and large than this.

KATHERINE PHILIPS

17. *Orinda upon Little Hector Philips*

TWICE forty months of wedlock I did stay,
Then had my vows crown'd with a lovely boy,
And yet in forty days he dropt away,
O swift vicissitude of human joy.

I did but see him and he disappear'd,
I did but pluck the rose-bud and it fell,
A sorrow unforeseen and scarcely fear'd,
For ill can mortals their afflictions spell.

And now (sweet babe) what can my trembling heart
Suggest to right my doleful fate or thee,
Tears are my Muse and sorrow all my art,
So piercing groans must be thy elegy.

Thus whilst no eye is witness of my moan,
I grieve thy loss (Ah boy too dear to live)
And let the unconcernèd world alone,
Who neither will, nor can refreshment give.

An off'ring too for thy sad tomb I have,
Too just a tribute to thy early hearse,
Receive these gasping numbers to thy grave,
The last of thy unhappy mother's verse.

ANNE, MARCHIONESS OF WHARTON

1632-1685

18 *On the Storm between Gravesend and
Dieppe*

(*Made at that Time*)

WHEN the tempestuous sea did foam and roar,
Tossing the bark from the long-wish'd-for shore,
With false affected fondness it betray'd,
Striving to keep what perish'd, if it stay'd.
Such is the love of impious men, where're
Their cruel kindness lights, 'tis to ensnare :
I, toss'd in tedious storms of troubled thought,
Was careless of the waves the ocean brought.
My anchor Hope was lost, and too too near
On either hand were rocks of sad despair,
Mistaken seamen prais'd my fearless mind,
Which, sunk in seas of grief, could dare the wind.
In Life, tempestuous Life, is dread and harm,
Approaching Death had no unpleasing form ;
Approaching Death appeases ev'ry storm.

19.

A Song

HOW hardly I conceal'd my tears !
How oft did I complain !
When many tedious days my fears
Told me I lov'd in vain.

But now my joys as mild are grown,
And hard to be conceal'd :
Sorrow may make a silent moan,
But joy will be reveal'd.

ANNE, MARCHIONESS OF WHARTON

I tell it to the bleating flocks,
To every stream and tree,
And bless the hollow murmuring rocks,
For echoing back to me.

Thus you may see with how much joy
We want, we wish, believe ;
'Tis hard such passion to destroy,
But easie to deceive.

APHRA BEHN

1640-1689

20.

Song

LOVE in fantastic triumph sat
Whilst bleeding hearts around him flow'd,
For whom fresh paines he did create,
And strange tyrannic power he show'd ;

From thy bright eyes he took his fire,
Which round about in sport he hurl'd ;
But 'twas from mine he took desire,
Enough to undo the amorous world.

From me he took his sighs and tears,
From thee his pride and cruelty ;
From me his languishments and fears,
And every killing dart from thee.

Thus thou and I the god have arm'd,
And set him up a deity ;
But my poor heart alone is harm'd,
Whilst thine the victor is, and free.

APHRA BEHN

21.

Song

(from 'Lycidus')

A CONSTANCY in love I'll prize,
And be to beauty true :
And doat on all the lovely eyes,
That are but fair and new.
On Cloris' charms to day I'll feed,
To-morrow Daphne move ;
For bright Lucinda next I'll bleed,
And still be true to love.

But glory only and renown
My serious hours shall claim ;
My nobler minutes those shall crown,
My looser hours, my flame.
All the fatigues of love I'll hate,
And Phillis's new charms
That hopeless fire shall dissipate,
My heart for Cloe warms.

The easy nymph I once enjoy'd
Neglected now shall pass,
Possession, that has love destroy'd,
Shall make me pitiless.
In vain she now attracts and mourns,
Her moving power is gone,
Too late (when once enjoy'd) she burns,
And yielding, is undone.

APHRA BEHN

My friend, the little charming boy,
Conforms to my desires,
And 'tis but to augment my joy
He pains me with his fires ;
All that 's in happy love I'll taste,
And rifle all his store,
And for one joy that will not last,
He brings a thousand more.

22.

Song

CEASE, cease, Aminta, to complain,
Thy languishments give o'er,
Why should'st thou sigh because the swain
Another does adore ?
Those charms, fond maid, that vanquish'd thee,
Have many a conquest won,
And sure he could not cruel be
And leave 'em all undone.

The youth a noble temper bears,
Soft and compassionate,
And thou canst only blame thy stars,
That made thee love too late ;
Yet had their influence all been kind
They had not cross'd my fate,
The tenderest hours must have an end,
And passion has its date.

The softest love grows cold and shy,
The face so late ador'd
Now unregarded passes by,
Or grows at last abhorr'd ;

APHRA BEHN

All things in Nature fickle prove,
See how they glide away ;
Think so in time thy hopeless love
Will die, as flowers decay.

23.

Song

HOW strongly does my passion flow,
Divided equally 'twixt two ?
Damon had ne'er subdued my heart,
Had not Alexis took his part ;
Nor could Alexis powerful prove,
Without my Damon's aid, to gain my love.

When my Alexis present is,
Then I for Damon sigh and mourn ;
But when Alexis I do miss,
Damon gains nothing but my scorn.
But if it chance they both are by,
For both alike I languish, sigh, and die.

Cure then, thou mighty wingèd god,
This restless fever in my blood ;
One golden-pointed dart take back :
But which, O Cupid, wilt thou take ?
If Damon's, all my hopes are crost ;
Or that of my Alexis, I am lost.

APHRA BEHN

24.

Song

A THOUSAND martyrs I have made,
 All sacrific'd to my desire;
 A thousand beauties have betray'd,
 That languish in resistless fire.
 The untam'd heart to hand I brought,
 And fixed the wild and wandering thought.

I never vow'd nor sigh'd in vain
 But both, tho' false, were well receiv'd.
 The fair are pleas'd to give us pain,
 And what they wish is soon believ'd.
 And tho' I talk'd of wounds and smart,
 Love's pleasures only touched my heart.

Alone the glory and the spoil
 I always laughing bore away;
 The triumphs, without pain or toil,
 Without the hell, the heav'n of joy.
 And while I thus at random rove
 Despis'd the fools that whine for love.

'EPHELIA'

16? - 16?

25.

Love's First Approach

STREPHON I saw, and started at the sight,
 And interchangeably looked red and white;
 I felt my blood run swiftly to my heart,
 And a chill trembling seize each outward part:

‘EPHELIA’

My breath grew short, my pulse did quicker beat,
My heart did heave, as it would change its seat :
A faint cold sweat o'er all my body spread,
A giddy megrim wheel'd about my head :
When for the reason of this change I sought,
I found my eyes had all the mischief wrought ;
For they my sort to Strephon had betray'd,
And my weak heart his willing victim made :
The traitors, conscious of the treason
They had committed 'gainst my reason,
Looked down with such a bashful guilty fear,
As made their fault to every eye appear.
Though the first fatal look too much had done,
The lawless wanderers would still gaze on,
Kind looks repeat, and glances steal, till they
Had looked my liberty and heart away :
Great Love, I yield ; send no more darts in vain,
I am already fond of my soft chain ;
Proud of my fetters, so pleased with my state,
That I the very thought of Freedom hate.
O mighty Love ! thy art and power join,
To make his frozen breast as warm as mine ;
But if thou try'st, and canst not make him kind,
In Love such pleasant, real sweets I find,
That, though attended with despair it be,
'Tis better still than a wild liberty.

‘EPHELIA’

26.

Song

YOU wrong me, Strephon, when you say,
I'm jealous or severe,
Did I not see you kiss and play
With all you came a-near?
Say, did I ever chide for this,
Or cast one jealous eye
On the bold nymphs, that snatch'd my bliss
While I stood wishing by.

Yet though I never disapproved
This modish liberty,
I thought in them you only loved
Change and variety:
I vainly thought my charms so strong,
And you so much my slave,
No nymph had power to do me wrong,
Or break the chains I gave.

But when you seriously address
With all your winning charms,
Unto a servile shepherdess,
I'll throw you from my arms:
I'd rather choose you should make love
To every face you see,
Than Mopsa's dull admirer prove,
And let her rival me.

‘EPHELIA’

27. *To one that asked me why I loved J. G.*

WHY do I love? go ask the glorious sun
Why every day it round the world doth run:
Ask Thames and Tiber why they ebb and flow:
Ask damask roses why in June they blow:
Ask ice and hail the reason why they're cold:
Decaying beauties, why they will grow old:
They'll tell thee, Fate, that everything doth move,
Inforces them to this, and me to love.
There is no reason for our love or hate,
'Tis irresistible as Death or Fate;
'Tis not his face; I've sense enough to see,
That is not good, though doated on by me:
Nor is't his tongue, that has this conquest won,
For that at least is equalled by my own:
His carriage can to none obliging be,
'Tis rude, affected, full of vanity:
Strangely ill natur'd, peevish and unkind,
Unconstant, false, to jealousy inclin'd:
His temper could not have so great a power,
'Tis mutable, and changes every hour:
Those vigorous years that women so adore
Are past in him: he's twice my age and more;
And yet I love this false, this worthless man,
With all the passion that a woman can;
Doat on his imperfections, though I spy
Nothing to love; I love, and know not why.
Since 'tis decreed in the dark book of Fate,
That I should love, and he should be ingrate.

‘EPHELIA’

28.

Mocked in Anger

FAREWELL, ungrateful man, sail to some land,
Where treachery and ingratitude command;
There meet with all the plagues that man can bear,
And be as wretched as I'm happy here.
'Twere vain to wish that Heav'n would punish thee,
'Twere vain to invoke the wind and sea,
To fright thee with rude storms, for surely Fate
Without a wish, will punish the ingrate.
Its justice and thy crimes Heav'n so well knows,
That all its creatures it will make thy foes
(If they're not so already), but none can
Love such a worthless, such a sordid man;
And though we've now no public enemies,
And you're too strong for private piracies,
Yet is the vessel in more danger far,
Than when with all our neighbours we had war:
For all that know what guest it doth contain,
Will strive to fire or sink it in the main.
Plagued for thy sake, they all will reckon thee
The Achan, or accursèd thing to be.

29.

Fortune Mistaken

THOUGH Fortune have so far from me removed
All that I wish, or all I ever loved,
And robbed our Europe of its chief delight,
To bless the Africk world with Strephon's sight:
There with a lady beauteous, rich and young,
Kind, witty, virtuous, the best born among

‘EPHELIA’

The Africk maids, presents this happy swain,
Not to oblige him, but to give me pain :
Then to my ears, by tattling fame, conveys
The tale with large additions ; and to raise
My anger higher, tells me 'tis designed
That Hymen's rites their hands and hearts must bind.
Now she believes my business done, and I
At the dire news would fetch a sigh and die :
But she's deceived, I in my Strephon grow,
And if he's happy, I must needs be so :
Or if Fate could our interests disjoin,
At his good fortune I should ne'er repine,
Though 'twere my ruin ; but I exult to hear,
Insulting Mopsa I no more shall fear ;
No more he'll smile upon that ugly Witch :
In that one thought I'm happy, great and rich.
And blind dame Fortune, meaning to destroy,
Has filled my soul with extasies of joy :
To him I love she's given a happy fate,
And quite destroyed and ruined her I hate.

30. To Phylocles, inviting him to Friendship

BEST of thy sex ! if sacred friendship can
Dwell in the bosom of inconstant man,
As cold and clear as ice, as snow unstained,
With Love's loose crimes unsullied, unprofaned,
Or you a woman with that name dare trust,
And think to friendship's ties we can be just,
In a strict league together we'll combine,
And [] friendship's bright example shine.

‘EPHELIA’

We will forget the difference of sex,
Nor shall the world's rude censure us perplex
Think me all man : my soul is masculine,
And capable of as great things as thine.

I can be generous, just and brave,
Secret and silent as the grave,
And if I cannot yield relief,
I'll sympathise in all thy grief.

I will not have a thought from thee I'll hide,
In all my actions thou shalt be my guide ;
In every joy of mine thou shalt have share,
And I will bear a part in all thy care.

Why do I vainly talk of what we'll do ?
We'll mix our souls, you shall be me, I you ;
And both so one it shall be hard to say
Which is Phylocles, which Ephelia.

Our ties shall be as strong as the chains of Fate,
Conquerors and kings our joys shall emulate ;
Forgotten friendship, held at first divine,
To its native purity we will refine.

31.

My Fate

O H cruel Fate, when wilt thou weary be ?
When satisfied with tormenting me ?
What have I e'er designed, but thou hast crost ?
All that I wished to gain by thee, I've lost :
From my first infancy, thy spite thou'st shown
And from my cradle, I've thy malice known ;

‘EPHELIA’

Thou snatch'st my parents in their tender age,
Made me a victim to the furious rage
Of cruel fortune, as severe as thee ;
Yet I resolved to brave my destiny,
And did, with more than female constancy.
Not all thy malice could extort a tear,
Nor all thy rage could ever teach me fear :
Still as thy power diminished my estate
My fortitude did my desires abate,
In every state I did my mind content
And nicely did thy cross designs prevent ;
Seeing thy plots did unsuccessful prove,
As a sure torment next, thou taught'st me love :
But here thou wert deceived too, for my swain,
As soon as he perceived, pitied my pain :
He met my passion with an equal fire,
Both sweetly languished in a soft desire :
Clasped in each other's arms we sat all day,
Each smile I gave he'd with a kiss repay :
In every hour an age's bliss we reaped,
And lavish favours on each other heaped.
Now sure (thought I) destiny doth relent,
And her insatiate tyranny repent :
But how mistaken ! how deceived was I !
Alas ! she only raised my hopes thus high,
To cast me down with greater violence ;
For midst our joys, she snatched my shepherd hence
To Africa : yet though I was neglected,
I bore it better than could be expected :
Without regret I let him cross the sea,
When I was told it for his good would be,
But when I heard the nuptial knot he'd tied,

‘EPHELIA’

And made an Africk nymph his happy bride :
My temper then I could no longer hold,
I cursed my fate, I cursed the power of gold,
I cursed the easiness believed at first,
And (Heaven forgive me) Him I almost cursed.
Hearing my loss, to him was mighty gain ;
I checked my rage, and soon grew calm again :
Malicious Fate, seeing this would not do,
Made Strephon wretched, to make me so too.
Of all her plagues, this was the weightiest stroke,
This blow my resolved heart hath almost broke :
Yet, spite of Fate, this comfort I’ve in store,
She’s no room left for any ill thing more.

MARY MOLLINEUX

c. 1648-1695

32. *On the Sight of a Skull*

BEHOLD, ambitious lump of clay refined,
Thy epilogue ; see, see to what design’d !
So soon as thou wert born, so soon as air
Affords thee breath, thy vitals to repair,
So soon as thy small feeble embrion breast
Is of an active power, unknown, possess’d ;
So soon thou may’st expect the dreadful day,
When thou once more must be reduc’d to clay ;
And the whole fabrick of thy body must
Again be brought to its first nothing, dust :
Then shall those eyes, those crystal eyes of thine,
Which now like sparkling diamonds do shine,

MARY MOLLINEUX

Their little chambers circular forsake,
And them to essence more obscure betake ;
The tender funnel of thy nose must thence
Corroded be, and lose its smelling Sense ;
And all the volume of thy face will be
So chang'd, none may thereby remember thee.

33.

To Her Lord

ALAS, how hard a Thing
It is to bring
Into a true Subjection Flesh and Blood,
Quietly to entertain
(And not complain)
Those Exercises that attend for Good !

My Life, my Joy, my Love,
If thus thou please to prove
And exercise my poor perplexèd Mind,
Teach me to wait in Fear,
That I may learn to hear
What Trials may attend, of any Kind :

And, guarded by thy Ray,
Walk in the Way,
That leads directly to the Throne of Grace ;
Where in Humility,
Poor I may be
Admitted to sit down i' th' heav'nly Place.

MARY MOLLINEUX

And there to thee discharge
My griefs at large,
As to a Bosom-Friend, that bears with me,
And often passes by
Faults of Infirmary :
Alas, I cannot bear too much for thee !

ANNE KILLIGREW

1661 (?)—1685

34. *On a Picture painted by Herself,
representing Two Nymphs of Diana*

WE are Diana's virgin train,
Descended of no mortal strain ;
Our bows and arrows are our goods,
Our pallaces, the lofty woods,
The hills and dales, at early morn,
Resound and eccho with our horn ;
We chase the hind and fallow deer,
The wolf and boar both dread our spear,
In swiftmess we outstrip the wind,
An eye and thought we leave behind ;
We fauns and shaggy satyrs awe,
To sylvan pow'rs we give the law :
Whatever does provoke our hate,
Our javelins strike, as sure as fate ;
We bathe in springs, to cleanse the soil,
Contracted by our eager toil ;
In which we shine like glittering beams
Or christal in the christal streams ;

ANNE KILLIGREW

Though Venus we transcend in form,
No wanton flames our bosomes warm !
If you ask where such wights do dwell,
In what bless't clime, that so excel?
The poets onely that can tell.

35. *Upon the Saying that My Verses were
made by Another*

NEXT heaven, my vows to thee, O sacred Muse !
I offered up, nor didst thou them refuse.
O Queen of verse, said I, if thou'lt inspire,
And warm my soul with thy poetic fire,
No love of gold shall share with thee my heart,
Or yet ambition in my breast have part,
More rich, more noble I will ever hold
The Muse's laurel than a crown of gold.
An undivided sacrifice I'll lay
Upon thine altar, soul and body pay ;
Thou shalt my pleasure, my employment be,
My all I'll make a holocaust to thee.
The deity that ever does attend
Prayers so sincere, to mine did condescend.
I writ, and the judicious prais'd my pen :
Could any doubt ensuing glory then ?
What pleasing raptures fill'd my ravish'd sense,
How strong, how sweet, Fame, was thy influence !
And thine, false hope, that to my flatter'd sight
Didst glories represent so near and bright !
By thee deceiv'd, methought each verdant tree
Apollo's transform'd Daphne seemed to be ;

ANNE KILLIGREW

And every fresher branch, and every bough
Appear'd as garlands to empale my brow.
The learn'd in love say, thus the winged boy
Does first approach, drest up in welcome joy ;
At first he to the cheated lover's sight
Nought represents but rapture and delight,
Alluring hopes, soft fears, which stronger bind
Their hearts, than when they more assurance find.

Embolden'd thus, to fame I did commit
(By some few hands) my most unlucky wit.
But ah, the sad effects that from it came !
What ought t' have brought me honour, brought me shame !
Like Aesop's painted jay, I seem'd to all,
Adorn'd in plumes, I not my own could call :
Rifled like her, each one my feathers tore,
And, as they thought, unto the owner bore.
My laurels thus another's brow adorn'd,
My numbers they admir'd but me they scorn'd :
Another's brow that had so rich a store
Of sacred wreaths that circled it before ;
Where mine quite lost (like a small stream that ran
Into a vast, and boundless ocean)
Was swallow'd up with what it join'd, and drown'd,
And that abyss yet no accession found.
Orinda (Albion's and her sex's grace)
Ow'd not her glory to a beauteous face ;
It was her radiant soul that shone within,
Which struck a lustre thro' her outward skin ;
That did her lips and cheeks with roses dye,
Advanc'd her height and sparkled in her eye.
Nor did her sex at all obstruct her fame,
But higher 'mong the stars it fix'd her name ;

ANNE KILLIGREW

What she did write, not only all allow'd,
But every laurel to her laurel bow'd !

The envious age, only to me alone,
Will not allow what I do write my own ;
But let them rage and 'gainst a maid conspire,
So deathless numbers from my tuneful lyre
Do ever flow ; so, Phoebus, I by thee
Inspir'd divinely, and possess may be ;
I willingly accept Cassandra's fate,
To speak the truth, altho' believ'd too late.

36. *Epitaph on Herself*

WHEN I am dead, few friends attend my hearse,
And for a monument I leave my verse.

MRS. TAYLOR

c. 1685

37. *Song*

STREPHON hath fashion, wit, and youth,
With all things else that please ;
He nothing wants but Love and Truth
To ruin me with ease.

But he is flint, and bears the art
To kindle fierce desire,
Whose pow'r enflames another's heart,
And he ne're feels the fire.

MRS. TAYLOR

O how it does my soul perplex,
When I his charms recall,
To think he shou'd despise our sex ;
Or, what 's worse love 'em all.

So that my heart, like Noah's dove,
In vain has sought for rest,
Finding no hope to fix my love,
Returns into my breast.

MARY, LADY CHUDLEIGH

1656-1710

38.

Solitude

WHEN all alone in some belov'd retreat,
Remote from noise, from bus'ness and from strife,
Those constant curst attendants of the great,
I freely can with my own thoughts converse,
And cloath them in ignoble verse,
'Tis then I tast the most delicious feast of life :
There, uncontroul'd, I can my self survey,
And from observers free,
My intellectual pow'rs display,
And all th' opening scenes of beauteous Nature see :
Form bright ideas, and enrich my mind,
Enlarge my knowledge, and each error find ;
Inspect each action, ev'ry word dissect,
And on the failure of my life reflect :

MARY, LADY CHUDLEIGH

Then from my self, to books, I turn my sight,
And there, with silent wonder and delight,
Gaze on th' instructive venerable dead,
Those that in virtue's school were early bred,
And since by rules of honour always led ;
Who its strict laws with nicest care obey'd,
And were by calm unbyass'd reason sway'd :
Their great examples elevate my mind,
And I the force of all their precepts find ;
By them inspir'd, above dull earth I soar,
And scorn those trifles which I priz'd before.

39.

Song

WHY, Damon, why, why, why so pressing ?
The heart you beg's not worth possessing :
Each look, each word, each smile's affected,
And inward charms are quite neglected ;
Then scorn her, scorn her, foolish swain,
And sigh no more, no more, in vain ;

Beauty's worthless, fading, flying ;
Who would for trifles think of dying ?
Who for a face, a shape, would languish,
And tell the brooks and groves his anguish,
Till she, till she thinks fit to prize him,
And all, and all beside despise him ?

ANNE, COUNTESS OF WINCHILSEA

1660-1720

40. *The Soldier's Death*

TRAIL all your pikes, dispirit every drum,
March in a slow procession from afar,
Ye silent, ye dejected men of war!
Be still the hautboys, and the flute be dumb!
Display no more, in vain, the lofty banner;
For see! where on the bier before ye lies
The pale, the fall'n, the untimely sacrifice
To your mistaken shrine, to your false idol Honour.

41. *The Sensual Man*

WHEN to the Under-world despis'd he goes,
A pamper'd carcase on the worms bestows,
Who, rioting on the unusual chear,
As good a life enjoy, as he could boast of here.

42. *A Nocturnal Reverie*

IN such a night, when every louder wind
Is to its distant cavern safe confin'd;
And only gentle Zephyr fans his wings,
And lonely Philomel, still waking, sings;
Or from some tree, fam'd for the owl's delight,
She, hollowing clear, directs the wand'ers right:
In such a night, when passing clouds give place,
Or thinly veil the Heav'ns mysterious face;

ANNE, COUNTESS OF WINCHILSEA

When in some river, overhung with green,
The waving moon and trembling leaves are seen ;
When freshen'd grass now bears itself upright,
And makes cool banks to pleasing rest invite,
Whence springs the woodbind, and the bramble-rose,
And where the sleepy cowslip shelter'd grows ;
Whilst now a paler hue the foxglove takes,
Yet chequers still with red the dusky brakes :
When scatter'd glow-worms, but in twilight fine,
Shew trivial beauties watch their hour to shine ;
Whilst Salisb'ry stands the test of every light,
In perfect charms and perfect virtue bright :
When odours, which declin'd repelling day,
Thro' temperate air uninterrupted stray ;
When darken'd groves their softest shadows wear
And falling waters we distinctly hear ;
When thro' the gloom more venerable shows
Some ancient fabrick, awful in repose,
While sunburnt hills their swarthy looks conceal,
And swelling haycocks thicken up the vale :
When the loos'd horse now, as his pasture leads,
Comes slowly grazing thro' th' adjoining meads,
Whose stealing pace, and lengthen'd shade we fear,
Till torn-up forage in his teeth we hear :
When nibbling sheep at large pursue their food,
And unmolested kine rechew the cud ;
When curlews cry beneath the village walls,
And to her straggling brood the partridge calls ;
Their short-liv'd jubilee the creatures keep,
Which but endures, whilst tyrant-man do's sleep :
When a sedate consent the spirit feels,
And no fierce light disturbs, whilst it reveals ;

ANNE, COUNTESS OF WINCHILSEA

But silent musings urge the mind to seek
Something, too high for syllables to speak ;
Till the free soul to a compos'dness charm'd,
Finding the elements of rage disarm'd,
O'er all below a solemn quiet grown,
Joys in th' inferior world, and thinks it like her own :
In such a night let me abroad remain,
Till morning breaks, and all's confus'd again ;
Our cares, our toils, our clamours are renew'd,
Or pleasures, seldom reach'd, again pursu'd.

43. *A Wish for Her Retreat*

GIVE me there (since Heaven has shown
It was not good to be alone)
A partner suited to my mind,
Solitary, pleas'd and kind ;
Who, partially, may something see
Preferr'd to all the world in me ;
Slighting, by my humble side,
Fame and Splendour, Wealth and Pride.
When but two the Earth possest,
'Twas then happiest days, and best ;
They by bus'ness, nor by wars,
They by no domestick cares,
From each other e'er were drawn,
But in some grove, or flow'ry lawn,
Spent the swiftly flying time,
Spent their own and Nature's prime,
In Love ; that only passion given
To perfect Man, whilst friends with Heaven.

ANNE, COUNTESS OF WINCHILSEA

44.

Adam Pos'd

COU'D our first father, at his toilsome plough,
Thorns in his path, and labour on his brow,
Cloath'd only in a rude, unpolish'd skin,
Cou'd he a vain fantastick nymph have seen,
In all her airs, in all her antick graces,
Her various fashions, and more various faces;
How had it pos'd that skill, which late assign'd
Just appellations to each several kind!
A right idea of the sight to frame;
T' have guest from what new element she came;
T' have hit the wav'ring form, and giv'n this Thing a name.

45.

The Wit and the Beau

STREPHON, whose person ev'ry grace
Was careful to adorn;
Thought, by the beauties of his face,
In Silvia's love to find a place,
And wonder'd at her scorn.

With bows, and smiles he did his part;
But Oh! 'twas all in vain:
A youth less fine, a youth of Art,
Had talk'd himself into her heart
And wou'd not out again.

Strephon with change of habits press'd,
And urg'd her to admire;
His love alone the other dress'd,
As verse or prose became it best,
And mov'd her soft desire.

ANNE, COUNTESS OF WINCHILSEA

This found, his courtship Strephon ends,
Or makes it to his glass ;
There in himself now seeks amends,
Convinc'd, that where a Wit pretends,
A Beau is but an ass.

46. *The Critick and the Writer of Fables*

WEARY, at last, of the Pindarick way,
Thro' which adventurously the Muse wou'd stray ;
To Fable I descend with soft delight,
Pleas'd to translate, or easily endite :
Whilst aery fictions hastily repair
To fill my page, and rid my thoughts of care,
As they to birds and beasts new gifts impart,
And teach as poets shou'd, whilst they divert.

But here, the critick bids me check this vein.
Fable, he crys, tho' grown th' affected strain,
But dies, as it was born, without regard or pain.
Whilst of his aim the lazy trifler fails,
Who seeks to purchase fame by childish tales.

Then, let my verse, once more, attempt the skies,
The easily persuaded poet cries,
Since meaner works you men of taste despise.
The walls of Troy shall be our loftier stage,
Our mighty theme the fierce Achilles' rage.
The strength of Hector, and Ulysses' arts
Shall boast such language, to adorn their parts,
As neither Hobbes nor Chapman cou'd bestow,
Or did from Congreve, or from Dryden flow.

ANNE, COUNTESS OF WINCHILSEA

Amidst her towers, the dedicated horse
Shall be receiv'd, big with destructive force ;
Till men shall say, when flames have brought her down,
'Troy is no more, and Ilium was a town.'

Is this the way to please the Men of Taste,
The interrupter cries, this old Bombast ?
I'm sick of Troy, and in as great a fright,
When some dull pedant wou'd her wars recite,
As was soft Paris, when compell'd to fight.

To shades and springs shall we awhile repair,
The Muse demands, and in that milder air
Describe some gentle swain's unhappy smart
Whose folded arms still press upon his heart,
And deeper drive the too far enter'd dart ?
Whilst Phillis with a careless pleasure reigns,
The joy, the grief, the envy of the plains ;
Heightens the beauty of the verdant woods,
And softens all the murmurs of the floods.

Oh ! stun me not with these insipid dreams,
Th' eternal hush, the lullaby of streams
Which still, he cries, their even measures keep,
Till both the writers, and their readers sleep.
But urge thy pen, if thou wou'd'st move our thoughts,
To shew us private, or the publick faults.
Display the times, High-Church or Low provoke ;
We'll praise the weapon, as we like the stroke,
And warmly sympathizing with the spite
Apply to thousands what of one you write.

ANNE, COUNTESS OF WINCHILSEA

Then, must that single stream the town supply,
'The harmless Fable-writer do's reply,
And all the rest of Helicon be dry?
And when so many choice productions swarm,
Must only Satire keep your fancies warm?
Whilst even there, you praise with such reserve,
As if you'd in the midst of plenty starve,
Tho' ne'er so liberally we authors carve.
Happy the men, whom we divert with ease,
Whom Operas and Panegyrics please.

47.

To Death

O KING of Terrors, whose unbounded sway
All that have life, must certainly obey,
The King, the Priest, the Prophet, all are thine,
Nor wou'd ev'n God (in flesh) thy stroke decline.
My name is on thy roll, and sure I must
Encrease thy gloomy kingdom in the dust.
My soul at this no apprehension feels,
But trembles at thy swords, thy racks, thy wheels;
Thy scorching fevers, which distract the sense,
And snatch us raving, unprepar'd from hence;
At thy contagious darts, that wound the heads
Of weeping friends, who wait at dying beds.
Spare these, and let thy time be when it will;
My bus'ness is to dye, and thine to kill.
Gently thy fatal sceptre on me lay,
And take to thy cold arms, insensibly, thy prey.

LADY GRISEL BAILLIE

1665-1746

48. *Werena my Heart's licht*

THERE ance was a may, and she lo'ed na men ;
She biggit her bonnie bow'r down in yon glen ;
But now she cries, Dool, and a well-a-day !
Come down the green gait and come here away !

When bonnie young Johnnie cam owre the sea,
He said he saw naething sae lovely as me ;
He hecht me baith rings and mony braw things—
And werena my heart's licht, I wad dee.

He had a wee titty that loe'd na me,
Because I was twice as bonny as she ;
She raised sic a pother 'twixt him and his mother
That werena my heart's licht, I wad dee.

The day it was set, and the bridal to be :
The wife took a dwam and lay down to dee ;
She maned and she graned out o' dolour and pain,
Till he vow'd he never wad see me again.

His kin was for ane of a higher degree,
Said—What had he do wi' the likes of me ?
Appose I was bonnie, I wasna for Johnnie—
And werena my heart's licht, I wad dee.

Thèy said I had neither cow nor calf,
Nor dribbles o' drink ring through the draff,
Nor pickles o' meal rins thro' the mill e'e—
And werena my heart's licht, I wad dee.

LADY GRISEL BAILLIE

His titty she was baith wylie and slee :
She spied me as I cam owre the lea ;
And then she ran in, and made a loud din—
Believe your ain e'en, and ye trow not me.

His bonnet stood ay fu' round on his brow,
His auld ane look'd ay as well as some's new
But now he lets 't wear ony gait it will hing,
And casts himself dowie upon the corn bing.

And now he gaes daund'ring about the dykes,
And a' he dow do is to hund the tykes :
The live-lang nicht he ne'er-steeks his e'e—
And werena my heart's licht, I wad dee.

Were I but young for thee, as I hae been,
We should hae been gallopin' down on yon green,
And linkin' it owre the lily-white lea—
And wow, gin I were but young for thee !

49. *The Ewe-Buchtin's Bonnie*

THE ewe-buchtin's bonnie, baith e'enin' and morn,
When owr blithe shepherds play on the bog-reed and
horn ;
While we're milking, they're lilting, baith pleasant and
clear ;
But my heart's fit to break when I think on my dear.

O the shepherds take pleasure to blow on the horn,
To raise up their flocks o' sheep soon in the morn ;
On the bonnie green banks they feed pleasand and free,
But alas, my dear heart, all my sighing's for thee !

HON. MARY MONK

?-1715

50. *On a Favourite Dog*

PRESS gently on him, earth, and all around
Ye flowers spring up, and deck th' enamelled ground,
Breathe forth your choicest odours, and perfume
With all your fragrant sweets his little tomb.

51. *Epitaph on a Gallant Lady*

O'ER this marble drop a tear
Here lies fair Rosalind :
All mankind was pleased with her
And she with all mankind.

52. *Verses, written on her Death-bed at
Bath to her Husband in London*

THOU who dost all my worldly thoughts employ,
Thou pleasing source of all my earthly joy,
Thou tenderest husband and thou dearest friend,
To thee this first, this last adieu I send !
At length the conqueror death asserts his right,
And will for ever veil me from thy sight ;
He wooes me to him with a cheerful grace,
And not one terror clouds his meagre face ;
He promises a lasting rest from pain,
And shews that all life's fleeting joys are vain ;

HON. MARY MONK

Th' eternal scenes of heaven he sets in view,
And tells me that no other joys are true.
But love, fond love, would yet resist his power,
Woud fain awhile defer the parting hour ;
He brings thy mourning image to my eyes,
And would obstruct my journey to the skies.
But say, thou dearest, thou unwearied friend !
Say, should'st thou grieve to see my sorrows end ?
'Thou know'st a painful pilgrimage I've past ;
And should'st thou grieve that rest is come at last ?
Rather rejoice to see me shake off life,
And die as I have liv'd, thy faithful wife.

ELIZABETH (SINGER) ROWE

1674-1737

53. *From Her Elegy on Her Husband,
who died Young*

LOST in despair, distracted and forlorn,
The lover I, and tender husband mourn.
Whate'er to such superior worth was due,
Whate'er excess the fondest passion knew,
I felt for thee, dear youth ; my joys, my care,
My prayers themselves were thine, and only where
Thou wast concern'd, my virtue was sincere.
Whene'er I begg'd for blessings on thy head,
Nothing was cold or formal that I said.
My warmest vows to Heav'n were made for thee,
And love still mingled with my piety.

ELIZABETH (SINGER) ROWE

O! thou wast all my glory, all my pride ;
Thro' life's uncertain paths my constant guide.
Regardless of the world, to gain thy praise
Was all that could my just ambition raise.

.
List'ning to him, my cares were charm'd to rest,
And love and silent rapture fill'd my breast,
Unheeded, the gay moments took their flight,
And time was only measur'd by delight.
I hear the lov'd, the melting accent still,
And still the warm, the tender transport feel :
Again I see the sprightly passions rise,
And life and pleasure kindle in his eyes.
My fancy paints him now with ev'ry grace,
But ah ! the dear resemblance mocks my fond embrace,
The flatt'ring vision takes its hasty flight,
And scenes of horror swim before my sight ;
Grief and despair in all their terrors rise ;
A dying lover pale and gasping lies.
Each dismal circumstance appears in view,
The fatal object is for ever new,

.
Why did they tear me from thy breathless clay ?
I should have stay'd and wept my life away.
Yet, gentle shade ! whether thou now dost rove,
Thro' some blest vale, or ever-verdant grove,
One moment listen to my grief, and take
The softest vows that ever love can make.
For thee, all thoughts of pleasure I forgo,
For thee my tears shall never cease to flow ;
For thee at once I from the world retire,
To feed in silent shades a hopeless fire.

ELIZABETH (SINGER) ROWE

My bosom all thy image shall retain,
The full impression there shall still remain :
As thou hast taught my kinder heart to prove
The noblest height, and elegance of love ;
That sacred passion I to thee confine,
My spotless faith shall be for ever thine.

54. *To a Friend who Persuades me to
Leave the Muse*

FORGO the charming Muses ! No, in spite
Of your ill-natur'd prophecy I'll write ;
And for the future paint my thoughts at large,
I waste no paper at the Hundred's charge :
I rob no neighb'ring geese of quills, nor slink,
For a collection, to the church for ink :
Beside, my Muse is the most gentle thing
That ever yet made an attempt to sing :
I call no lady punk, nor gallants fops,
Nor set the married world an edge for ropes ;
Yet I'm so nat'rally inclin'd to rhyming,
That undesign'd, my thoughts burst out a-chiming ;
My active genius will by no means sleep,
Pray let it then its proper channel keep.
I've told you, and you may believe me too,
That I must this, or greater mischief do ;
And let the world think me inspir'd or mad,
I'll surely write whilst paper's to be had.

CATHARINE COCKBURN

1679-1749

55. *Song—The Vain Advice*

AH, gaze not on those eyes! forbear
That soft enchanting voice to hear:
Not looks of basilisks give surer death,
Nor syrens sing with more destructive breath.

Fly, if thy freedom thou'dst maintain;
Alas! I feel, th' advice is vain!
A heart, whose safety but in flight does lie,
Is too far lost to have the power to fly.

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU

1689-1762

56. *Verses addressed to the Imitator¹ of the
First Satire of the Second Book of Horace*

I N two large columns on thy motley page,
Where Roman wit is strip'd with English rage;
Where ribaldry to satire makes pretence;
And modern scandal rolls with ancient sense:
Whilst on one side we see how Horace thought;
And on the other how he never wrote:
Who can believe, who view the bad and good,
That the dull copyist better understood

¹ Pope, who had libelled her.

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU

That Spirit, he pretends to imitate,
Than heretofore that Greek he did translate?

Thine is just such an image of *his* pen,
As thou thyself art of the sons of men :
Where our own species in burlesque we trace,
A sign-post likeness of the human race,
That is at once resemblance and disgrace.
If *he* has thorns, they all on roses grow ;
Thine like rude thistles, and mean brambles show,
With this exception, that tho' rank the soil,
Weeds as they are they seem produc'd by toil.
Satire should, like a polish'd razor keen,
Wound with a touch, that 's scarcely felt or seen.
Thine is an oyster-knife that hacks and hews ;
The rage but not the talent to abuse ;
And is in *hate*, what *love* is in the stews.
'Tis the gross *lust* of hate, that still annoys,
Without distinction, as gross love enjoys :
Neither to folly, nor to vice confin'd ;
The object of thy spleen is human kind :
It preys on all, who yield or who resist ;
To thee 'tis provocation to exist

If none do yet return th' intended blow,
You all your safety to your dullness owe :
But whilst that armour thy poor corps defends,
'Twill make thy readers few, as are thy friends ;
Those, who thy nature loath'd, yet lov'd thy art,
Who lik'd thy head, and yet abhor'd thy heart ;
Chose thee, to read, but never to converse,
And scorn'd in prose, him whom they priz'd in verse ;

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU

Even they shall now their partial error see,
Shall shun thy writings, like thy company,
And to thy books shall ope their eyes no more,
Than to thy person they wou'd do their door.

57. *An Answer to a Love-Letter*

IS it to me, this sad lamenting strain?
Are heaven's choicest gifts bestowed in vain?
A plenteous fortune, and a beauteous bride,
Your love rewarded, gratify'd your pride:
Yet leaving her—'tis me that you pursue
Without one single charm, but being new.
How vile is man! how I detest their ways
Of artful falsehood, and designing praise!
Tasteless, an easy happiness you slight,
Ruin your joy, and mischief your delight,
Why should poor pug (the mimic of your kind)
Wear a rough chain, and be to box confin'd?
Some cup, perhaps, he breaks, or tears a fan
While roves unpunish'd the destroyer, man.
Not bound by vows, and unrestrain'd by shame,
In sport you break the heart, and rend the fame.
Not that your art can be successful here,
Th' already plunder'd need no robber fear:
Nor sighs, nor charms, nor flatteries can move,
Too well secur'd against a second love.
Once, and but once, that devil charm'd my mind;
To reason deaf, to observation blind;
I idly hop'd (what cannot love persuade?)
My fondness equal'd, and my love repaid:

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU

Slow to distrust, and willing to believe,
Long hush'd my doubts, and did myself deceive ;
But oh ! too soon—this tale would ever last ;
Sleep, sleep my wrongs, and let me think them past.
For you, who mourn with counterfeited grief,
And ask so boldly like a begging thief,
May soon some other nymph inflict the pain,
You know so well with cruel art to feign.
Though long you sported with Dan Cupid's dart,
You may see eyes, and you may feel a heart.
So the brisk wits, who stop the evening coach,
Laugh at the fear which follows their approach ;
With idle mirth, and haughty scorn despise
The passenger's pale cheek and staring eyes :
But seiz'd by Justice, find a fright no jest,
And all the terror doubled in their breast.

58. *In Answer to a Lady Who Advised Retirement*

YOU little know the heart that you advise ;
I view this various scene with equal eyes :
In crowded courts I find myself alone,
And pay my worship to a nobler throne.
Long since the value of this world I know,
Pity the madness, and despise the show :
Well as I can my tedious part I bear,
And wait for my dismissal without fear.
Seldom I mark mankind's detested ways,
Not hearing censure, nor affecting praise ;
And, unconcern'd, my future fate I trust
To that sole Being, merciful and just.

FANNY GREVILLE

18th century.

59. *Prayer for Indifference*

I ASK no kind return in Love ;
No tempting charm to please ;
Far from the heart such gifts remove,
That sighs for peace and ease.

Nor ease, nor peace, that heart can know,
That, like the needle true,
Turns at the touch of joy or woe ; .
But, turning, trembles too.

Far as distress the soul can wound
'Tis pain in each degree ;
'Tis bliss but to a certain bound,
Beyond—is agony.

LAETITIA PILKINGTON

1712-1750

60. *Written on her Death-Bed*

MY Lord, my Saviour, and my God,
I bow to thy correcting rod ;
Nor will I murmur or complain,
Tho' every limb be fill'd with pain ;
Tho' my weak tongue its aid denies ;
And daylight wounds my wretched eyes.

ALISON COCKBURN

1712-1794

61. *The Flowers of the Forest*

I'VE seen the smiling of Fortune beguiling,
I've tasted her favours, and felt her decay;
Sweet is her blessing, and kind her caressing,
But soon it is fled,—it is fled far away.

I've seen the forest adorn'd of the foremost,
With flowers of the fairest, both pleasant and gay;
Full sweet was their blooming, their scent the air perfuming,
But now they are wither'd and a' wede away.

I've seen the morning, with gold the hills adorning,
And the red storm roaring, before the parting day;
I've seen Tweed's silver streams, glittering in the sunny
beams,
Turn drumly and dark, as they roll'd on their way.

O fickle Fortune! why this cruel sporting?
Why thus perplex us poor sons of a day?
Thy frowns cannot fear me, thy smiles cannot cheer me,
Since the flowers of the forest are a' wede away.

MARY MASTERS

c. 1733

62. *To One who Questioned her being the
Author of some Verses*

SEARCH but those strains, you think so much excel,
Scan ev'ry verse, and try the numbers well:
You'll plainly see, in almost ev'ry line,
Distinguishing defects to prove them mine.

MARY MASTERS

63. *Answer to a Panegyrick by one who
supposed her handsome*

MY songs th' attentive nymphs with pleasure hear,
Because in me no rival charms they fear.
My shape erroneous, and my stature low
Can to the eye no dang'rous beauty show.
The list'ning youths who at a distance hear,
Secure of freedom, may approach more near.
All I can boast, is this one single grant,
Just sense enough to know how much I want.

JUDITH MADAN

c. 1750

64. *Written in her brother's Coke upon
Littleton*

THOU, who labour'st in this rugged mine,
Mayst thou to gold th' unpolished ore refine !
May each dark page unfold its haggard brow !
Doubt not to reap, if thou can'st bear to plough.
To tempt thy care, may, each revolving night,
Purses and maces swim before thy sight !
From hence in times to come, advent'rous deed !
May'st thou essay to look and speak like Mead !
When the black bag and rose no more shall shade
With martial air the honours of thy head ;
When the full wig thy visage shall enclose,
And only leave to view thy learnèd nose.
Safely may'st thou defy beaux, wits, and scoffers,
While tenants, in fee-simple, stuff thy coffers.

ELIZABETH CARTER

1717-1806

65. *Epitaph on an Infant*

THOUGH infant years no pompous honours claim,
The vain parade of monumental fame,
To better praise the last great day shall rear
The spotless innocence that slumbers here.

MARY LEAPOR

1722-1746

66. *Upon her Play being returned to Her
Stained with Claret*

WELCOME, dear wanderer, once more !
Thrice welcome to thy native cell !
Within this peaceful humble door
Let thou and I contented dwell !

But say, O whither hast thou rang'd ?
Why dost thou blush a crimson hue ?
Thy fair complexion 's greatly chang'd :
Why, I can scarce believe 'tis you.

Then tell, my son, O tell me, where
Didst thou contract this sottish dye ?
You kept ill company, I fear,
When distant from your parent's eye.

MARY LEAPOR

Was it for this, O graceless child,
Was it for this you learn'd to spell?
Thy face and credit both are spoil'd;
Go drown thyself in yonder well.

I wonder how thy time was spent:
No news (alas !) hast thou to bring?
Hast thou not climb'd the Monument?
Nor seen the lions, nor the King?

But now I'll keep you here secure:
No more you view the smoaky sky:
The court was never made (I'm sure)
For idiots, like thee and I.

67.

Hope

(Where it may reasonably be cherished)

IF trifling Hope has any room to plead,
'Tis that where Nature's simple dictates lead:
So the wet hind, who travels o'er the plain
Through the cold mire and the afflicting rain;
Tho' his low roofs with trickling showers run,
May hope next morn to see the chearful sun:
Or when keen hunger at the evening tide
Drives home the shepherd to his rustick bride,
His honest reason haply might not stray,
Tho' he should dream of dumpling all the way.

68.

Of Friendship

OF all companions I would choose to shun
Such, whose blunt truths are like a bursting gun.

MARY JONES

? -1778

69. *An Epistle to Lady Bowyer*

HOW much of paper's spoil'd ! what floods of ink !
And yet how few, how very few can think !
The knack of writing is an easy trade ;
But to think well requires—at least a head.
Once in an age, one genius may arise,
With wit well cultur'd, and with learning wise :
Like some tall oak, behold his branches shoot !
No tender scions springing at the root.
Whilst lofty Pope erects his laurell'd head,
No lays, like mine, can live beneath his shade :
Nothing but weeds and moss, and shrubs are found :
Cut, cut them down, why cumber they the ground ?
And yet you'd have me write ? For what ? for whom ?
To curl a favourite in a dressing room ?
To mend a candle when the snuff's too short ?
Or save rappee for chamber-maids at court ?
Glorious ambition ! noble thirst of fame !
No, but you'd have me write—to get a name.
Alas ! I'd live unknown, unenvy'd too ;
'Tis more than Pope with all his wit can do ;
'Tis more than you, with wit and beauty join'd,
A pleasing form and a discerning mind.
'The world and I are no such cordial friends ;
I have my purpose, they their various ends.
I say my prayers, and lead a sober life,

MARY JONES

Nor laugh at Cornus, or at Cornus' wife.
What's fame to me, who pray, and pay my rent ?
If my friends know me honest, I'm content.

Well, but the joy to see my works in print !
Myself too pictur'd in a mezzo-tint !
The preface done, the dedication fram'd,
With lies enough to make a lord asham'd !
Thus I step forth ; an authoress in some sort :
My patron's name ? ' O choose some lord at court.
' One that has money which he does not use,
' One you may flatter much, that is, abuse.
' For if you're nice, and cannot change your note,
' Regardless of the trimm'd or untrimm'd coat,
Believe me, friend, you'll ne'er be worth a groat.'

Well then, to cut this mighty matter short,
I've neither friend, nor interest, at court.
Quite from St. James's to thy stairs, Whitehall,
I hardly know a creature, great or small,
Except one maid of honour, worth them all.
I have no business there—Let those attend
The courtly levee, or the courtly friend,
Who more than fate allows them dare to spend.
Or those whose avarice, with much, craves more,
The pension'd beggar, or the titled poor.
These are the thriving breed, the tiny great !
Slaves ! wretched slaves ! the journeymen of state !
Philosophers ! who calmly bear disgrace,
Patriots who sell their country for a place !
Shall I for these disturb my brains with rhyme ?
For these, like Bavius, creep, or Glencus, climb ?
Shall I go late to rest, and early rise,
To be the very creature I despise ?

MARY JONES

With face unmov'd, my poem in my hand,
Cringe to the porter, with the footman stand?
Perhaps my lady's maid, if not too proud,
Will stoop, you'll say, to wink me from the crowd;
Will entertain me till his lordship's drest,
With what my lady eats, and how she rests:
How much she gave for such a birth-day gown,
And how she tramped to every shop in town.
Sick at the news, impatient for my lord,
I'm forced to hear, nay smile, at every word.
Tom raps at last,—'his lordship begs to know
'Your name? your business?'—Sir, I'm not a foe;
I come to charm his lordship's listening ears
With verses, soft as music of the spheres.
'Verses!—alas! his lordship seldom reads:
'Pedants indeed with learning stuff their heads;
'But my good lord, as all the world can tell,
'Reads not even tradesmen's bills, and scorns to spell.
'But trust your lays with me—some things I've read,
'Was born a poet, tho' no poet bred:
'And if I find they'll bear my nicer view,
'I'll recommend your poetry—and you.'
Shock'd at his civil impudence, I start,
Pocket my poem, and in haste depart;
Resolv'd no more to offer up my wit,
Where footmen in the seat of critics sit.

Is there a Lord whose great unspotted soul,
Not places, pensions, ribbons can controul;
Unlac'd, unpowder'd, almost unobserv'd,
Eats not on silver while his train are starv'd;
Who, tho' to nobles or to kings ally'd,
Dares walk on foot, while slaves in coaches ride;

MARY JONES

With merit humble, and with greatness free,
Has bow'd to Freeman, and has din'd with me ;
Who, bred in foreign courts, and early known,
Has yet to learn the cunning of his own ;
To titles born, yet heir to no estate,
And harder still, too honest to be great ?
If such an one there be, well-bred, polite,
To him I'll dedicate, for him I'll write.

Peace to the rest—I can be no man's slave ;
I ask for nothing, tho' I nothing have.
By fortune humbled, yet not sunk so low
To shame a friend, or fear to meet a foe.
Meanness, in ribbons or in rags, I hate ;
And have not learnt to flatter, even the great.
Few friends I ask, and those who love me well ;
What more remains, these artless lines shall tell.

Of honest parents, not of great, I came ;
Not known to fortune, quite unknown to fame,
Frugal and plain, at no man's cost they eat,
Nor knew a baker's or a butcher's debt.
O be their precepts ever in my eye !
For one has learnt to live, and one to die.
Long may her widow'd age by Heaven be lent
Among my blessings ! and I'm well content.
I ask no more, but in some calm retreat,
To sleep in quiet, and in quiet eat.
No noisy slaves attending round my room ;
My viands wholesome, and my waiters dumb.
No orphans cheated, and no widow's curse,
No household lord, for better or for worse.
No monstrous sums to tempt my soul to sin,
But just enough to keep me plain and clean.

MARY JONES

And if sometimes, to smooth the rugged way,
Charlotte should smile, or you approve my lay,
Enough for me—I cannot put my trust
In lords ; smile lies, eat toads, or lick the dust.
Fortune her favours much too dear may hold :
An honest heart is worth its weight in gold.

JANE ELLIOT

1727-180

70. *A Lament for Flodden*

I'VE heard them lilting, at our ewe-milking,
Lasses a' lilting before dawn o' day ;
But now they are moaning on ilka green loaning,
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

At bughts, in the morning, nae blythe lads are scorning,
Lasses are lonely and dowie and wae ;
Nae daffing, nae gabbing, but sighing and sabbing,
Ilk ane lifts her leglin and hies her away.

In hairst, at the shearing, nae youths now are jeering,
The bandsters are lyart, and runckled and grey ;
At fair or at preaching, nae wooing, nae fleeching,
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

At e'en in the gloaming, nae swankies are roaming
'Bout stacks wi' the lasses at bogle to play ;
But ilk maid sits eerie, lamenting her dearie,
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

JANE ELLIOT

Dool and wae for the order sent our lads to the Border !
The English, for ance, by guile won the day ;
The Flowers of the Forest, that fought aye the foremost,
The prime of our land, lie cauld in the clay.

We'll hear nae mair lilting at our ewe-milking,
Women and bairns are heartless and wae ;
Sighing and moaning on ilka green loaning,
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

JENNY GRAHAME

18th century

71.

Wedlock

ALAS ! my son, you little know,
The sorrows which from wedlock flow :
Farewell, sweet hours of mirth and ease,
When you have gotten a wife to please.
Sae bide ye yet, and bide ye yet,
Ye little ken what's to betide ye yet,
The half o' that will gane you yet
If a wayward wife obtain you yet.

Your hopes are high, your wisdom small,
Woe has not had you in its thrall ;
The black cow on your foot ne'er trod,
Which makes you sing along the road.

When I, like you, was young and free,
I valued not the proudest she ;
Like you my boast was bold and vain,
That men alone were born to reign.

JENNY GRAHAME

Great Hercules and Sanipson too
Were stronger far than I or you,
Yet they were baffled by their dears,
And felt the distaff and the shears.

Stout gates of brass, and well-built walls,
Are proof 'gainst swords and cannon-balls;
But nought is found, by sea or land,
That can a wayward wife withstand.

ISOBEL PAGAN

1741-1821

72.

Ca' the Towes

CA' the yowes to the knowes,
Ca' them whare the heather grows,
Ca' them whare the burnie rows,
My bonnie dearie.

As I gaed down the water side,
There I met my shepherd lad,
He rowed me sweetly in his plaid,
And he ca'd me his dearie.

'Will ye gang down the water side,
And see the waves sae sweetly glide
Beneath the hazels spreading wide,
The moon it shines fu' clearly.'

I was bred up at nae sic school,
My shepherd lad, to play the fool;
And a' the day to sit in dool,
And naebody to see me.

ISOBEL PAGAN

‘Ye sall get gowns and ribbons meet,
Caul-leather shoon upon your feet,
And in my arms ye’s e lie and sleep,
And ye sall be my dearie.’

‘If ye’ll but stand to what ye’ve said,
I’s e gang wi’ you, my shepherd lad;
And ye may row me in your plaid,
And I sall be your dearie.’

‘While waters wimple to the sea,
While day blinks in the lift sae hie;
Till clay-cauld death sall blin’ my e’e
Ye aye shall be my dearie.’

ANNE HUNTER

1742-1821

73. *My Mother Bids me Bind my Hair*

MY mother bids me bind my hair,
With bands of rosy hue,
Tie up my sleeves with ribbons rare,
And lace my bodice blue.

‘For why’, she cries, ‘sit still and weep,
While others dance and play?’
Alas! I scarce can go or creep
While Lubin is away.

’Tis sad to think the days are gone
When those we love were near;
I sit upon this mossy stone
And sigh when none can hear.

ANNE HUNTER

And while I spin my flaxen thread,
And sing my simple lay,
The village seems asleep or dead,
Now Lubin is away..

ANNA LAETITIA BARBAULD

1743-1825

74. *To a Lady with Some Flowers*

FLOWERS to the Fair ! to you these flowers I bring,
And strive to greet you with an earlier spring.
Flowers sweet and gay, and delicate like you,
Emblems of innocence and beauty, too.
With flowers the Graces bind their yellow hair,
And flowery wreaths consenting lovers wear.
Flowers, the sole luxury which nature knew,
In Eden's pure and guiltless garden grew.
To loftier forms are rougher tasks assign'd,
The sheltering oak resists the stormy wind—
The tougher yew repels invading foes,
And the tall pine for future navies grows ;
But this soft family, to cares unknown,
Were born for pleasure and delight alone.
Gay without toil, and lovely without art,
They spring to cheer the sense and glad the heart.
Nor blush, my fair, to own you copy these ;
Your best, your sweetest empire is —to please.

LIFE! I know not what thou art,
 But know that thou and I must part;
 And when, or how, or where we met
 I own to me's a secret yet.
 But this I know, when thou art fled,
 Where'er they lay these limbs, this head,
 No clod so valueless shall be
 As all that then remains to me.
 O whither, whither dost thou fly?
 Where bend unseen thy trackless course?
 And in this strange divorce,
 Ah, tell where I must seek this compound I?
 To the vast ocean of empyreal flame
 From whence thy essence came
 Dost thou thy flight pursue, when freed
 From matter's base encumbering weed?
 Or dost thou, hid from sight,
 Wait, like some spell-bound knight,
 Through blank oblivious years th' appointed hour
 To break thy trance and reassume thy power?
 Yet canst thou without thought or feeling be?
 O say, what art thou, when no more thou 'rt thee?
 Life! we have been long together,
 Through pleasant and through cloudy weather;
 'Tis hard to part when friends are dear;
 Perhaps 'twill cost a sigh, a tear:—
 Then steal away, give little warning,
 Choose thine own time;
 Say not Good-night, but in some brighter clime
 Bid me Good-morning!

FRANCES BROOKE

1724-1789

76

Song

HER mouth, which a smile,
Devoid of all guile,
Half opens to view,
Is the bud of the rose
In the morning that blows,
Impearl'd with the dew.

More fragrant her breath
Than the flow'r-scented heath
At the dawning of day;
The hawthorn in bloom,
The lily's perfume,
Or the blossoms of may.

SUSANNA BLAMIRE

1747-1794

77.

Song

AND ye shall walk in silk attire,
And siller ha'e to spare,
Gin ye'll consent to be his bride,
Nor think o' Donald mair.
Oh, wha wad buy a silken gown
Wi' a puir broken heart?
Or what's to me a siller crown,
Gin frae my love I part?

The mind wha's every wish is pure
Far dearer is to me;
And ere I'm forced to break my faith,
I'll lay me down and dee:

SUSANNA BLAMIRE

For I ha'e pledged my virgin troth
Brave Donald's fate to share.
And he has gi'en to me his heart,
Wi a' its virtues rare.

His gentle manners wan my heart,
He gratefu' took the gift;
Could I but think to tak' it back,
It wad be waur than theft.
For langest life can ne'er repay
The love he bears to me;
And ere I'm forced to break my troth
I'll lay me down and dee.

CHARLOTTE SMITH

1749-1806

78.

Sonnet

Written at the Close of Spring

THE garlands fade that Spring so lately wove,
Each simple flower which she has nurs'd in dew,
Anemones, that spangled every grove,
The primrose wan, and harebell mildly blue.
No more shall violets linger in the dell,
Or purple orchis variegate the plain,
Till Spring again shall call forth every bell
And dress with hurried hands her wreaths again.
Ah, poor humanity! so frail, so fair,
And the fond visions of thy early day,
Till tyrant passion and corrosive care
Bid all thy fairy colours flee away!
Another May new birds and flowers shall bring;
Ah! why has happiness no second spring?

79.

Auld Robin Gray

WHEN the sheep are in the fauld, and the kye at
hame,

And a' the world to rest are gane,
The waes o' my heart fa' in showers frae my e'e,
While my gudeman lies sound by me.

Young Jamie lo'ed me weel, and sought me for his bride;
But saving a crown he had naething else beside:
To make the crown a pund, young Jamie gaed to sea;
And the crown and the pund were baith for me.

He hadna been awa' a week but only twa,
When my father brak his arm, and the cow was stown
awa';

My mother she fell sick, and my Jamie at the sea—
And auld Robin Gray came a-courtin' me.

My father couldna work, and my mother couldna spin,
I toil'd day and night, but their bread I couldna win;
Auld Rob maintained them baith, and wi' tears in his e'e
Said 'Jennie, for their sakes, O, marry me!'

My heart it said nay; I look'd for Jamie back;
But the wind it blew high, and the ship it was a wrack;
His ship it was a wrack—why didna Jamie dee?
Or why do I live to cry, Wae's me!

My father urged me sair: my mother didna speak;
But she looked in my face till my heart was like to break
They gied him my hand, but my heart was at the sea;
Sae auld Robin Gray he was gudeman to me.

LADY ANNE (LINDSAY) BARNARD

I hadna been a wife a week but only four,
When mournfu' as I sat on the stane at the door,
I saw my Jamie's wraith, for I couldna think it he,
Till he said 'I'm come hame to marry thee'.

O sair, sair did we greet, and muckle did we say ;
We took but ae kiss, and I bade him gang away :
I wish that I were dead, but I'm no like to dee ;
And why was I born to say, Wae's me !

I gang like a ghaist, and I carena to spin ;
I daurna think on Jamie, for that wad be a sin ;
But I'll do my best a gude wife to be,
For auld Robin Gray he is kind unto me.

HENRIETTA, LADY O'NEILL

1758-1793

80. *On Seeing Her Two Sons at Play*

SWEET age of blest delusion ! blooming boys,
Ah ! revel long in childhood's thoughtless joys,
With light and pliant spirits, that can stoop
To follow sportively the rolling hoop ;
To watch the sleeping top with gay delight,
Or mark with raptur'd gaze the sailing kite ;
Or eagerly pursuing Pleasure's call,
Can find it centr'd in the bounding ball !
Alas ! the day *will* come, when sports like these
Must lose their magic, and their power to please ;

HENRIETTA, LADY O'NEILL

Too swiftly fled, the rosy hours of youth
Shall yield their fairy-charms to mournful Truth ;
Even now, a mother's fond prophetic fear
Sees the dark train of human ills appear ;
Views various fortune for each lovely child,
Storms for the bold, and anguish for the mild ;
Beholds already those expressive eyes
Beam a sad certainty of future sighs ;
And dreads each suffering those dear breasts may know
In their long passage through a world of woe ;
Perchance predestin'd every pang to prove,
That treacherous friends inflict, or faithless love ;
For ah ! how few have found existence sweet,
Where grief is sure, but happiness deceit !

JOANNA BAILLIE

1762-1851

81. *A Mother to Her Waking Infant*

NOW in thy dazzled, half-oped eye,
Thy curled nose and lip awry,
Uphoisted arms and noddling head,
And little chin with crystal spread,
Poor helpless thing ! what do I see
That I should sing of thee ?

From thy poor tongue no accents come,
Which can but rub thy toothless gum :
Small understanding boasts thy face ;
Thy shapeless limbs nor step nor grace :
A few short words thy feats may tell ;
And yet I love thee well.

JOANNA BAILLIE

When wakes the sudden bitter shriek,
And redder swells thy little cheek ;
When rattled keys thy woes beguile,
And through thine eyelids gleams the smile ;
Still for thy weakly self is spent
Thy little silly plaint.

But when thy friends are in distress,
Thou'lt laugh and chuckle ne'ertheless ;
Nor with kind sympathy be smitten
Though all are sad but thee and kitten ;
Yet, puny varlet that thou art,
Thou twitchest at the heart.

Thy smooth round cheek so soft and warm ;
Thy pinky hand and dimpled arm ;
Thy silken locks that scantily peep,
With gold-tipp'd ends, where circles deep,
Around thy neck in harmless grace
So soft and sleekly hold their place,
Might harder hearts with kindness fill,
And gain our right good will.

Each passing clown bestows his blessing,
Thy mouth is worn with old wives' kissing :
E'en lighter looks the gloomy eye
Of surly sense when thou art by ;
And yet, I think, whoe'er they be,
They love thee not like me.

Perhaps when time shall add a few
Short months to thee, thou'lt love me too ;

JOANNA BAILLIE

And after that, through life's long way.
Become my sure and cheering stay :
Wilt care for me and be my hold,
When I am weak and old.

Thou'lt listen to my lengthen'd tale,
And pity me when I am frail—
—But see! the sweepy swimming fly,
Upon the window takes thine eye.
Go to thy little senseless play ;
Thou dost not heed my lay.

82.

The Kitten

WANTON drole, whose harmless play
Beguiles the rustic's closing day,
When drawn the evening fire about,
Sit aged crone and thoughtless lout,
And child upon his three-foot stool,
Waiting till his supper cool ;
And maid, whose cheek outblossoms the rose,
As bright the blazing faggot glows,
Who, bending to the friendly light,
Plies her task with busy sleight ;
Come, show thy tricks and sportive graces,
Thus circled round with merry faces.

Backward coil'd, and crouching low,
With glaring eyeballs watch thy foe,
The housewife's spindle whirling round,
Or thread, or straw, that on the ground

JOANNA BAILLIE

Its shadows throws, by urchin sly
Held out to lure thy roving eye ;
Then, onward stealing, fiercely spring
Upon the futile, faithless thing.
Now, wheeling round, with bootless skill,
Thy bo-peep tail provokes thee still,
As oft beyond thy curving side
Its jetty tip is seen to glide ;
Till, from thy centre starting far,
Thou sidelong rear'st, with rump in air,
Erected stiff, and gait awry,
Like madam in her tantrums high :
Tho' ne'er a madam of them all
Whose silken kirtle sweeps the hall,
More varied trick and whim displays,
To catch the admiring stranger's gaze.

Doth power in varied measures dwell,
All thy vagaries wild to tell ?
Ah no ! the start, the jet, the bound,
The giddy scamper round and round,
With leap, and jerk, and high curvet,
And many a whirling somerset,
(Permitted be the modern muse
Expression technical to use,)
These mock the deftest rhymers skill,
But poor in art, tho' rich in will.

The featest tumbler, stage-bedight,
To thee is but a clumsy wight,
Who every limb and sinew strains,
To do what costs thee little pains,

JOANNA BAILLIE

For which, I trow, the gaping crowd
Requites him oft with plaudits loud.
But, stopp'd the while thy wanton play,
Applauses too *thy* feats repay :
For then, beneath some urchin's hand,
With modest pride thou tak'st thy stand,
While many a stroke of fondness glides
Along thy back and tabby sides.
Dilated swells thy glossy fur,
And loudly sings thy busy purr ;
As, timing well the equal sound,
Thy clutching feet bepat the ground,
And all their harmless claws disclose,
Like prickles of an early rose ;
While softly from thy whisker'd cheek,
Thy half-clos'd eyes peer mild and meek.

But not alone by cottage fire
Do rustics rude thy feats admire ;
The learned sage, whose thoughts explore
The widest range of human lore,
Or, with unfetter'd fancy, fly
Thro' airy heights of poesy, :
Pausing, smiles with alter'd air,
To see thee climb his elbow-chair,
Or, struggling on the mat below,
Hold warfare with his slipper'd toe.
The widow'd dame, or lonely maid,
Who in the still but cheerless shade
Of home unsocial, spends her age,
And rarely turns a letter'd page,

JOANNA BAILLIE

Upon her hearth for thee lets fall
The rounded cork, or paper ball,
Nor chides thee on thy wicked watch
The ends of ravell'd skein to catch,
But lets thee have thy wayward will,
Perplexing oft her sober skill.
Even he, whose mind of gloomy bent,
In lonely tower or prison pent,
Reviews the coil of former days,
And loathes the world and all its ways ;
What time the lamp's unsteady gleam
Doth rouse him from his moody dream,
Feels, as thou gambol'st round his seat,
His heart with pride less fiercely beat,
And smiles, a link in thee to find
That joins him still to living kind.

Whence hast thou, then, thou witless puss,
The magic power to charm us thus ?
Is it, that in thy glaring eye,
And rapid movements, we descry,
While we at ease, secure from ill,
The chimney-corner snugly fill,
A lion darting on the prey,
A tiger at his ruthless play ?
Or is it, that in thee we trace,
With all thy varied wanton grace,
An emblem view'd with kindred eye,
Of tricky, restless infancy ?
Ah ! many a lightly-sportive child,
Who hath, like thee, our wits beguil'd,

JOANNA BAILLIE

To dull and sober manhood grown,
With strange recoil our hearts disown.
Even so, poor Kit ! must thou endure,
When thou becom'st a cat demure,
Full many a cuff and angry word,
Chid roughly from the tempting board.
And yet, for that thou hast, I ween,
So oft our favour'd playmate been,
Soft be the change which thou shalt prove
When time hath spoil'd thee of our love ;
Still be thou deem'd, by housewife fat,
A comely, careful, mousing cat,
Whose dish is, for the public good,
Replenish'd oft with savoury food.

Nor when thy span of life is past,
Be thou to pond or dunghill cast ;
But gently borne on goodman's spade,
Beneath the decent sod be laid,
And children show, with glistening eyes,
The place where poor old Pussy lies.

83.

Song

THE gowan glitters on the sward,
The lavrock's in the sky,
And colley on my plaid keeps ward,
And time is passing by.
Oh no ! sad and slow !
I hear nae welcome sound ;
The shadow of our trysting-bush,
It wears so slowly round !

JOANNA BAILLIE

My sheep-bell tinkles frae the west,
My lambs are bleating near ;
But still the sound that I lo'e best,
Alack! I canna hear!
Oh no! sad and slow!
The shadow lingers still ;
And like a lanely ghaist I stand,
And croon upon the hill.

I hear below the water roar,
The mill wi' clacking din ;
And Luckey scolding frae the door,
To bring the bairnies in.
Oh no! sad and slow!
These are nae the sounds for me ;
The shadow of our trysting-bush,
It creeps sae drearily !

I coft yestreen from chapman Tam
A snood o' bonnie blue,
And promis'd when our trysting cam,
To tie it round her brow.
Oh no! sad and slow!
The time it winna pass!
The shadow of that weary thorn
Is tether'd on the grass.

O now I see her on the way,
She's past the Witch's knowe ;
She's climbing up the Brownie's brae ;
My heart is in a lowe.

JOANNA BAILLIE

Oh no ! sad and slow !
'Tis glamrie I hae seen ;
The shadow of that hawthorn bush
Will move nae mair till e'en.

My book o' grace I'll try to read,
Tho' con'd wi' little skill ;
When colley barks, I'll raise my head,
And find her on the hill.
Oh no ! 'tis nae so !
The time will ne'er be gane !
The shadow of the trysting-bush
Is fix'd like ony stane.

84.

The Outlaw

THE chough and crow to roost are gone,
The owl sits on the tree,
The hush'd wind wails with feeble moan,
Like infant charity.
The wild-fire dances on the fen,
The red star sheds its ray,
Up-rouse ye, then, my merry men !
It is our opening day.

Both child and nurse are fast asleep,
And clos'd is every flower,
And winking tapers faintly peep
High from my Lady's bower ;
Bewilder'd hinds with shorten'd ken
Shrink on their murky way,
Up-rouse ye, then, my merry men !
It is our opening day.

JOANNA BAILLIE

Nor board nor garner own we now,
Nor roof nor latchèd door,
Nor kind mate bound by holy vow
To bless a good man's store ;
Noon lulls us in a gloomy den,
And night is grown our day,
Up-rouse ye, then, my merry men !
And use it as ye may.

CATHERINE M. FANSHAWE

1765-1834

85. *A Riddle on the Letter H*

'TWAS in heaven pronounced—it was mutter'd in hell;
And echo caught faintly the sound as it fell ;
On the confines of earth 'twas permitted to rest,
And the depths of the ocean its presence confess'd.
'Twill be found in the sphere when 'tis riven asunder,
Be seen in the lightning and heard in the thunder.
Twas allotted to man with his earliest breath,
Attends at his birth and awaits him in death :
Presides o'er his happiness, honour, and health,
Is the prop of his house and the end of his wealth.
In the heaps of the miser 'tis hoarded with care,
But is sure to be lost on his prodigal heir.
It begins every hope, every wish it must bound,
With the husbandman toils, and with monarchs is crown'd.
Without it the soldier, the seaman may roam,
But woe to the wretch who expels it from home !
In the whispers of conscience its voice will be found,
Nor e'en in the whirlwind of passion is drown'd.

CATHERINE M. FANSHAWE

"Twill not soften the heart ; and tho' deaf be the ear,
It will make it acutely and instantly hear.
Yet in shade let it rest like a delicate flower,
Ah, breathe on it softly—it dies in an hour.

MARY LAMB

1764-1847

86.

A Child

A CHILD'S a plaything for an hour ;
Its pretty tricks we try
For that or for a longer space—
Then tire, and lay it by.

But I knew one that to itself
All seasons could control ;
That would have mock'd the sense of pain
Out of a grievéd soul.

Thou straggler into loving arms,
Young climber-up of knees,
When I forget thy thousand ways
Then life and all shall cease.

CAROLINE, LADY NAIRNE

17

87.

The Land o' the Leal

I'M wearin' awa', John,
Like snaw-wreaths in thaw, John,
I'm wearin' awa'
To the land o' the leal.

CAROLINE, LADY NAIRNE

There's nae sorrow there, John :
There's neither cauld nor care, John,
The day is aye fair
In the land o' the leal.

Our bonnie bairn's there, John ;
She was baith guid and fair, John ;
And, oh ! we grudged her sair
To the land o' the leal.
But sorrow's sel' wears past, John,
And joy's a-comin' fast, John,
The joy that's aye to last
In the land o' the leal.

Sae dear that joy was bought, John,
Sae free the battle fought, John,
That sinfu' man e'er brought
To the land o' the leal.
O dry your glistening e'e, John !
My saul lings to be free, John,
And angels beckon me
To the land o' the leal.

O haud ye, leal and true, John ;
Your day it's wearin' through, John,
And I'll welcome you
To the land o' the leal.
Now fareyeweel, my ain John :
This warld's cares are vain, John ;
We'll meet, and we'll be fain,
In the land o' the leal.

88.

The Auld House

O H, the auld house, the auld house
What though the rooms were wee?

Oh, kind hearts were dwelling there,

And bairnies fu' o' glee!

The wild rose and the jessamine

Still hang upon the wa'—

How mony cherished memories

Do they, sweet flowers, reca'!

Oh, the auld laird, the auld laird,

Sae canty, kind, and crouse!

How mony did he welcome to

His ain wee dear auld house!

And the leddy, too, sae genty,

There sheltered Scotland's heir,

And clipt a lock wi' her ain hand

Frae his lang yellow hair.

The mavis still doth sweetly sing,

The blue-bells sweetly blaw;

The bonnie Earn's clear winding still,

But the auld house is awa'.

The auld house, the auld house!

Deserted though ye be,

There ne'er can be a new house

Will seem sae fair to me.

Still flourishing the auld pear tree,

The bairnies liked to see;

And oh, how aften did they speir

When ripe they a' wad be!

CAROLINE, LADY NAIRNE

The voices sweet, the wec bit feet
Aye rinnin' here and there ;
The merry shout—oh ! whiles we greet
To think we'll hear nae mair.

For they are a' wide scattered now,
Some to the Indies gane,
And ane, alas ! to her lang hame ;
Not here we'll meet again.
The Kirkyaird ! the Kirkyaird !
Wi' flowers o' every hue,
Sheltered by the holly's shade,
An' the dark sombre yew.

The setting sun, the setting sun,
How glorious it gaed down !
The cloudy splendour raised our hearts
To cloudless skies abune !
The auld dial, the auld dial !
It tauld how time did pass :
The wintry winds ha'e dung it down,
Now hid 'mang weeds and grass.

89.

Caller Herrin'

*W*HALL buy my caller herrin' ?
They're bonnie fish and halesome farin' :
Wha'll buy my caller herrin',
New drawn frae the Forth ?

When ye were sleepin' on your pillows,
Dreamed ye aught o' our puir fellows
Darkling as they faced the billows,
A' to fill the woven willows ?

CAROLINE, LADY NAIRNE

Wha'll buy my caller herrin' ?
They're no brought here without brave darin',
Buy my caller herrin',
Hauled through wind and rain.

Wha'll buy my caller herrin' ?
Oh, ye may ca' them vulgar farin' ;
Wives and mithers, 'maist despairin',
Ca' them lives o' men.

When the creel o' herrin' passes,
Ladies, clad in silks and laces,
Gather in their braw pelisses,
Cast their heads, and screw their faces.

Caller herrin's no got lightly ;
Ye can trip the spring fu' tightly ;
Spite o' tauntin', flauntin', flingin',
Gow¹ has set you a' a-singin'.

Neebour wives, now tent my tellin'
When the bonnie fish ye're sellin',
At ae word be in your dealin',
Truth will stand when a' thing's failin'.

¹ A famous fiddler.

CAROLINE, LADY NAIRNE

90.

Heavenward

WOULD you be young again?
So would not I—
One tear to memory giv'n,
Onward I'd hie.
Life's dark flood forded o'er,
All but at rest on shore,
Say, would you plunge once more,
With home so nigh?

If you might, would you now
Retrace your way?
Wander through thorny wilds,
Faint and astray?
Night's gloomy watches fled,
Morning all beaming red,
Hope's smiles around us shed,
Heavenward—away.

Where are they gone, of yore
My best delight?
Dear and more dear, tho' now
Hidden from sight.
Where they rejoice to be,
There is the land for me;
Fly time—fly speedily!
Come, life and light.

91.

Sonnet to Twilight

MEET Twilight ! soften the declining day,
 And bring the hour my pensive spirit loves ;
 When o'er the mountain slow descends the ray
 That gives to silence the deserted groves.
 Ah, let the happy court the morning still,
 When, in her blooming loveliness array'd,
 She bids fresh beauty light the vale, or hill,
 And rapture warble in the vocal shade.
 Sweet is the odour of the morning's flower,
 And rich in melody her accents rise ;
 Yet dearer to my soul the shadowy hour,
 At which her blossoms close, her music dies—
 For then, while languid nature droops her head,
 She wakes the tear 'tis luxury to shed.

92.

Sonnet to Hope

OVER skill'd to wear the form we love !
 To bid the shapes of fear and grief depart ;
 Come, gentle Hope ! with one gay smile remove
 The lasting sadness of an aching heart.
 Thy voice, benign Enchantress ! let me hear ;
 Say that for me some pleasures yet shall bloom,
 That Fancy's radiance, Friendship's precious tear,
 Shall soften, or shall chase, misfortune's gloom.
 But come not glowing in the dazzling ray,
 Which once with dear illusions charm'd my eye,
 O ! strew no more, sweet flatterer ! on my way
 The flowers I fondly thought too bright to die ;
 Visions less fair will soothe my pensive breast,
 That asks not happiness, but longs for rest !

ANNE M' VICAR GRANT OF LAGGAN

1755-1838

93.

Postscript

J EAN, fetch that heap of tangled yarn,
And bring those stockings here to darn,
And get from Anne the dairy keys,
That I may go and count my cheese ;
To every useful occupation,
Befitting of my place or station,
I'll henceforth dedicate my time,
And if again I write in rhyme,
'Twill be a shrewd severe lampoon
On country wives who fly to town,
And leave their dairy and relations,
To curl their hair and follow fashions :
Or else an acrimonious satire
On matrons who, in spite of Nature,
With common useful duties quarrel,
To plant in vain the barren laurel.

AMELIA OPIE

1769-1853

94.

A Lament

THERE was an eye whose partial glance
Could ne'er my numerous failings see ;
There was an ear that heard untired
When others spoke in praise of me.
There was a heart time only taught
With warmer love for me to burn ;
A heart whene'er from home I roved
Which fondly pined for my return.

AMELIA OPIE

There was a lip which always breathed
E'en short farewells in tones of sadness ;
There was a voice whose eager sound
My welcome spoke with heartfelt gladness.

There was a mind whose vigorous power
On mine its own effulgence threw,
And called my humble talents forth,
While thence its dearest joys it drew.

There was a love which for my weal
With anxious fears would overflow ;
Which wept, which pray'd for me, and sought
From future ills to guard—But now !—

That eye is closed, and deaf that ear,
That lip and voice are mute for ever ;
And cold that heart of anxious love,
Which Death alone from mine could sever :

And lost to me that ardent mind,
Which loved my various tasks to see ;
And oh ! of all the praise I gain'd
His was the dearest far to me !

Now I unloved, uncheered, *alone*,
Life's weary wilderness must tread,
Till He who heals the broken heart
In mercy bids me join the dead.

To Death

COME not in terrors clad, to claim
An unresisting prey :
Come like an evening shadow, Death !
So stealthily, so silently !
And shut mine eyes, and steal my breath ;
Then willingly, O willingly,
With thee I'll go away.

What need to clutch with iron grasp
What gentlest touch may take ?
What need with aspect dark to scare,
So awfully, so terribly,
The weary soul would hardly care,
Call'd quietly, call'd tenderly,
From thy dread power to break ?

'Tis not as when thou markest out
The young, the blest, the gay,
The loved, the loving—they who dream
So happily, so hopefully ;
Then harsh thy kindest call may seem,
And shrinkingly, reluctantly,
The summon'd may obey.

But I have drunk enough of life—
The cup assign'd to me
Dash'd with a little sweet at best,
So scantily, so scantily—
To know full well that all the rest
More bitterly, more bitterly,
Drugg'd to the last will be.

CAROLINE SOUTHEY

And I may live to pain some heart
That kindly cares for me :
To pain, but not to bless, O Death !
Come quietly—come lovingly—
And shut mine eyes and steal my breath ;
Then willingly, O willingly,
I'll go away with thee.

EMMA (HART) WILLARD

1787-1870

96. *Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep*

ROCKED in the cradle of the deep
I lay me down in peace to sleep ;
Secure I rest upon the wave,
For Thou, O Lord, hast power to save.
I know Thou wilt not slight my call,
For Thou dost mark the sparrow's fall ;
And calm and peaceful shall I sleep,
Rocked in the cradle of the deep.

When in the dead of night I lie
And gaze upon the trackless sky,
The star-bespangled heavenly scroll,
The boundless waters as they roll,—
I feel Thy wondrous power to save
From perils of the stormy wave :
Rocked in the cradle of the deep,
I calmly rest and soundly sleep.

EMMA (HART) WILLARD

And such the trust that still were mine,
Though stormy winds swept o'er the brine,
Or though the tempest's fiery breath
Roused me from sleep to wreck and death.
In ocean cave, still safe with Thee
The germ of immortality !
And calm and peaceful shall I sleep,
Rocked in the cradle of the deep.

FELICIA DOROTHEA HEMANS

1793-1835

97. *Night-Blowing Flowers*

CHILDREN of night ! unfolding meekly, slowly,
To the sweet breathings of the shadowy hours,
When dark-blue heavens look softest and most holy,
And glow-worm light is in the forest bowers ;
To solemn things and deep,
To spirit-haunted sleep,
To thoughts, all purified
From earth, ye seem allied,
O dedicated flowers !

Ye, from the gaze of crowds your beauty veiling,
Keep in dim vestal urns the sweetness shrined ;
Till the mild moon, on high serenely sailing,
Looks on you tenderly and sadly kind.

So doth love's dreaming heart
Dwell from the throng apart,
And but to shades disclose
The inmost thought, which glows
With its pure life entwined.

FELICIA DOROTHEA HEMANS

Shut from the sounds wherein the day rejoices,
To no triumphant song your petals thrill,
But send forth odours with the faint, soft voices
Rising from hidden streams, when all is still.

So doth lone prayer arise
Mingling with secret sighs,
When grief unfolds, like you,
Her breast, for heavenly dew
In silent hours to fill.

98.

Casabianca

THE boy stood on the burning deck
Whence all but he had fled ;
The flame that lit the battle's wreck
Shone round him o'er the dead.
Yet beautiful and bright he stood,
As born to rule the storm—
A creature of heroic blood,
A proud, though childlike, form.

The flames rolled on—he would not go
Without his father's word ;
That father, faint in death below,
His voice no longer heard.
He called aloud :—‘ Say, father, say
If yet my task is done !’
He knew not that the chieftain lay
Unconscious of his son.

FELICIA DORÓTHEA HEMANS

‘Speak, father!’ once again he cried,

‘If I may yet be gone!’

And but the booming shots replied,

And fast the flames rolled on.

Upon his brow he felt their breath,

And in his waving hair,

And looked from that lone post of death

In still, yet brave despair;

And shouted yet once more aloud,

‘My father! must I stay?’

While o’er him fast, through sail and shroud,

The wreathing fires made way.

They wrapt the ship in splendour wild,

They caught the flag on high,

And streamed above that gallant child

Like banners in the sky.

There came a burst of thunder-sound—

The boy—Oh! where was he?

Ask of the winds that far around

With fragments strewed the sea!—

With mast, and helm, and pennon fair,

That well had borne their part;

But the noblest thing which perished there

Was that young faithful heart.

99.

A Dirge

CALM on the bosom of thy God,
Fair spirit, rest thee now!

Ee’n while with us thy footstep trod,

His seal was on thy brow.

FELICIA DOROTHEA HEMANS

Dust, to its narrow house beneath !
Soul, to its place on high !—
They that have seen thy look in death
No more may fear to die.

SARA COLERIDGE

1802-1852

100. *O Sleep, my Babe*

O SLEEP, my babe, hear not the rippling wave,
Nor feel the breeze that round thee ling'ring strays
To drink thy balmy breath,
And sigh one long farewell.

Soon shall it mourn above thy wat'ry bed,
And whisper to me, on the wave-beat shore,
Deep murm'ring in reproach,
Thy sad untimely fate.

Ere those dear eyes had open'd to the light,
In vain to plead, thy coming life was sold,
O waken'd but to sleep,
Whence it can wake no more !

A thousand and a thousand silken leaves
The tufted beech unfolds in early spring,
All clad in tenderest green,
All of the self-same shape ;

A thousand infant faces, soft and sweet,
Each year sends forth, yet every mother views
Her last not least beloved
Like its dear self alone.

SARA COLERIDGE

Its musing mind hath ever yet foreshaped
The face to-morrow's sun shall first reveal,
No heart hath e'er conceived
What love that face will bring.

O sleep, my babe, nor heed how mourns the gale
To part with thy soft locks and fragrant breath,
As when it deeply sighs
O'er autumn's latest bloom.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

1806-1861

101. *To George Sand*

I. *A Desire*

THOU large-brained woman and large-hearted man,
Self-called George Sand! whose soul, amid the lions
Of thy tumultuous senses, moans defiance,
And answers roar for roar, as spirits can!
I would some mild miraculous thunder ran
Above the applauded circus, in appliance
Of thine own nobler nature's strength and science,
Drawing two pinions, white as wings of swan,
From thy strong shoulders, to amaze the place
With holier light! that thou to woman's claim,
And man's, mightst join beside the angel's grace
Of a pure genius sanctified from blame,—
Till child and maiden pressed to thine embrace,
To kiss upon thy lips a stainless fame.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

102.

II. *A Recognition*

TRUE genius, but true woman ! dost deny
Thy woman's nature with a manly scorn,
And break away the gauds and armlets worn
By weaker women in captivity ?
Ah, vain denial ! that revolted cry
Is sobbed in by a woman's voice forlorn !—
Thy woman's hair, my sister, all unshorn,
Floats back dishevelled strength in agony,
Disproving thy man's name ! and while before
The world thou burnest in a poet-fire,
We see thy woman-heart beat evermore
Through the large flame. Beat purer, heart, and higher,
Till God unsex thee on the heavenly shore,
Where unincarnate spirits purely aspire.

Sonnets from the Portuguese

103.

i

I THOUGHT once how Theocritus had sung
Of the sweet years, the dear and wished-for years,
Who each one in a gracious hand appears
To bear a gift for mortals, old or young :
And, as I mused it in his antique tongue,
I saw, in gradual vision through my tears,
The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,
Those of my own life, who by turns had flung
A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware,
So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move
Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair,
And a voice said in mastery while I strove, . . .
'Guess now who holds thee.'—'Death,' I said. But, there,
The silver answer rang, . . 'Not Death, but Love.'

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

104.

iii

UNLIKE are we, unlike, O princely Heart!
 Unlike our uses and our destinies.
 Our ministering two angels look surprise
 On one another, as they strike athwart
 Their wings in passing. Thou, bethink thee, art
 A guest for queens to social pageantries,
 With gages from a hundred brighter eyes
 Than tears even can make mine, to ply thy part
 Of chief musician. What hast *thou* to do
 With looking from the lattice-lights at me,
 A poor, tired, wandering singer, . . . singing through
 The dark, and leaning up a cypress tree?
 The chrism is on thine head,—on mine, the dew,—
 And Death must dig the level where these agree,

105.

vi

GO from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand
 Henceforward in thy shadow. Nevermore
 Alone upon the threshold of my door
 Of individual life, I shall command
 The uses of my soul, nor lift my hand
 Serenely in the sunshine as before,
 Without the sense of that which I forebore, . . .
 Thy touch upon the palm. The widest land
 Doom takes to part us, leaves thy heart in mine
 With pulses that beat double. What I do
 And what I dream include thee, as the wine
 Must taste of its own grapes. And when I sue
 God for myself, He hears that name of thine,
 And sees within my eyes the tears of two.

106.

xxii

WHEN our two souls stand up erect and strong,
 Face to face, silent, drawing nigh and nigher,
 Until the lengthening wings break into fire
 At either curvèd point,—what bitter wrong
 Can the earth do to us, that we should not long
 Be here contented? Think. In mounting higher,
 The angels would press on us, and aspire
 To drop some golden orb of perfect song
 Into our deep, dear silence. Let us stay
 Rather on earth, Belovéd,—where the unfit
 Contrarious moods of men recoil away
 And isolate pure spirits, and permit
 A place to stand and love in for a day,
 With darkness and the death-hour rounding it.

107.

xxviii

MY letters! all dead paper, . . . mute and white!—
 And yet they seem alive and quivering
 Against my tremulous hands which loose the string
 And let them drop down on my knee to-night.
 This said, . . . he wished to have me in his sight
 Once, as a friend: this fixed a day in spring
 To come and touch my hand . . . a simple thing,
 Yet I wept for it!—this, . . . the paper's light . . .
 Said, *Dear, I love thee*; and I sank and quailed
 As if God's future thundered on my past.
 This said, *I am thine*—and so its ink has paled
 With lying at my heart that beat too fast.
 And this . . . O Love, thy words have ill availed,
 If, what this said, I dared repeat at last!

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

108.

xlili

HOW do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of every day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints,—I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

109.

A Musical Instrument

I

WHAT was he doing, the great god Pan,
Down in the reeds by the river?
Spreading ruin and scattering ban,
Splashing and paddling with hoofs of a goat,
And breaking the golden lilies afloat
With the dragon-fly on the river.

II

He tore out a reed, the great god Pan,
From the deep cool bed of the river:
The limpid water turbidly ran,
And the broken lilies a-dying lay,
And the dragon-fly had fled away,
Ere he brought it out of the river.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

III

High on the shore sate the great god Pan;
While turbidly flowed the river;
And hacked and hewed as a great god can,
With his hard bleak steel at the patient reed,
Till there was not a sign of a leaf indeed
To prove it fresh from the river.

IV

He cut it short, did the great god Pan
(How tall it stood in the river!),
Then drew the pith, like the heart of a man,
Steadily from the outside ring,
And notched the poor dry empty thing
In holes, as he sate by the river.

V

‘This is the way,’ laughed the great god Pan
(Laughed while he sate by the river),
‘The only way, since gods began
To make sweet music, they could succeed.’
Then, dropping his mouth to a hole in the reed,
He blew in power by the river.

VI

Sweet, sweet, sweet, O Pan!
Piercing sweet by the river!
Blinding sweet, O great god Pan!
The sun on the hill forgot to die,
And the lilies revived, and the dragon-fly
Came back to dream on the river.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

VII

Yet half a beast is the great god Pan,
To laugh as he sits by the river,
Making a poet out of a man :
The true gods sigh for the cost and pain,
For the reed which grows nevermore again
As a reed with the reeds in the river.

110. *The Cry of the Children*

I

DO ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years?
They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,
And *that* cannot stop their tears.
The young lambs are bleating in the meadows,
The young birds are chirping in the nest,
The young fawns are playing with the shadows,
The young flowers are blowing toward the west—
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
They are weeping bitterly !
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
In the country of the free.

II

Do you question the young children in the sorrow,
Why their tears are falling so ?
The old man may weep for his to-morrow
Which is lost in Long Ago ;
The old tree is leafless in the forest,
The old year is ending in the frost,
The old wound, if stricken, is the sorest,
The old hope is hardest to be lost.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

But the young, young children, O my brothers,
Do you ask them why they stand
Weeping sore before the bosom of their mothers,
In our happy Fatherland ?

III

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
And their looks are sad to see,
For the man's hoary anguish draws and presses
Down the cheeks of infancy.
'Your old earth', they say, 'is very dreary ;
Our young feet', they say, 'are very weak !
Few paces have we taken, yet are weary—
Our grave-rest is very far to seek.
Ask the aged why they weep, and not the children ;
For the outside earth is cold ;
And we young ones stand without, in our bewildering,
And the graves are for the old.'

IV

'True,' say the children, 'it may happen
That we die before our time ;
Little Alice died last year—her grave is shapen
Like a snowball, in the rime.
We looked into the pit prepared to take her :
Was no room for any work in the close clay !
From the sleep wherein she lieth none will wake her,
Crying, "Get up, little Alice ! it is day."
If you listen by that grave, in sun and shower,
With your ear down, little Alice never cries ;
Could we see her face, be sure we should not know her,
For the smile has time for growing in her eyes :

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

And merry go her moments, lulled and stilled in
The shroud by the kirk-chime !
It is good when it happens', say the children,
'That we die before our time.'

V

Alas, alas, the children ! they are seeking
Death in life, as best to have ;
They are binding up their hearts away from breaking,
With a cerement from the grave.
Go out, children, from the mine and from the city,
Sing out, children, as the little thrushes do ;
Pluck your handfuls of the meadow cowslips pretty,
Laugh aloud, to feel your fingers let them through !
But they answer, ' Are your cowslips of the meadows
Like our weeds anear the mine ?
Leave us quiet in the dark of the coal-shadows,
From your pleasures fair and fine !

VI

' For oh,' say the children, ' we are weary,
And we cannot run or leap ;
If we cared for any meadows, it were merely
To drop down in them and sleep.
Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping,
We fall upon our faces, trying to go ;
And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,
The reddest flower would look as pale as snow ;
For, all day, we drag our burden tiring
Through the coal-dark, underground—
Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron
In the factories, round and round.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

VII

' For, all day, the wheels are droning, turning,—
 Their wind comes in our faces,—
Till our hearts turn,—our head, with pulses burning,
 And the walls turn in their places ;
Turns the sky in the high window blank and reeling,
 Turns the long light that drops adown the wall,
Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling,
 All are turning, all the day, and we with all.
And all day, the iron wheels are droning,
 And sometimes we could pray,
" O ye wheels " (breaking out in a mad moaning),
 " Stop ! be silent for to-day ! "

VIII

Aye ! be silent ! Let them hear each other breathing
 For a moment, mouth to mouth !
Let them touch each other's hands, in a fresh wreathing
 Of their tender human youth !
Let them feel that this cold metallic motion
 Is not all the life God fashions or reveals :
Let them prove their living souls against the notion
 That they live in you, or under you, O wheels !—
Still, all day, the iron wheels go onward,
 Grinding life down from its mark ;
And the children's souls, which God is calling sunward,
 Spin on blindly in the dark.

IX

Now tell the poor young children, O my brothers,
 To look up to Him and pray ;
So the blessed One who blesseth all the others,
 Will bless them another day.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

They answer, 'Who is God that He should hear us,
While the rushing of the iron wheels is stirred ?
When we sob aloud, the human creatures near us
Pass by, hearing not, or answer not a word.
And *we* hear not (for the wheels in their resounding)
Strangers speaking at the door :
Is it likely God, with angels singing round Him,
Hears our weeping any more ?

X

'Two words, indeed, of praying we remember,
And at midnight's hour of harm,
"Our Father," looking upward in the chamber,
We say softly for a charm.
We know no other words, except "Our Father",
And we think that, in some pause of angels' song,
God may pluck them with the silence sweet to gather,
And hold both within His right hand which is strong.
"Our Father!" If He heard us, He would surely
(For they call Him good and mild)
Answer, smiling down the steep world very purely,
"Come and rest with Me, My child."

XI

'But, no !' say the children, weeping faster,
'He is speechless as a stone ;
And they tell us, of His image is the master
Who commands us to work on.
Go to !' say the children,—'up in Heaven,
Dark, wheel-like, turning clouds are all we find.
Do not mock us ; grief has made us unbelieving—
We look up for God, but tears have made us blind.'

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

Do you hear the children weeping and disproving,
O my brothers, what ye preach ?
For God's possible is taught by His world's loving,
And the children doubt of each.

XII

And well may the children weep before you !
They are weary ere they run ;
They have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory
Which is brighter than the sun.
They know the grief of man, without its wisdom ;
They sink in man's despair, without its calm ;
Are slaves, without the liberty in Christdom,
Are martyrs, by the pang without the palm,—
Are worn, as if with age, yet unretrievingly
The harvest of its memories cannot reap,—
Are orphans of the earthly love and heavenly.
Let them weep ! let them weep !

XIII

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
And their look is dread to see,
For they mind you of their angels in high places,
With eyes turned on Deity !—
'How long,' they say, 'how long, O cruel nation,
Will you stand, to move the world, on a child's heart,—
Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation,
And tread onward to your throne amid the mart ?
Our blood splashes upward, O goldheaper,
And your purple shows your path !
But the child's sob in the silence curses deeper
Than the strong man in his wrath.'

111.

To Flush, My Dog

I

LOVING friend, the gift of one
Who her own true faith has run
Through thy lower nature,
Be my benediction said
With my hand upon thy head,
Gentle fellow creature !

II

Like a lady's ringlets brown,
Flow thy silken ears adown
Either side demurely
Of thy silver-suited breast,
Shining out from all the rest
Of thy body purely.

III

Darkly brown thy body is,
Till the sunshine striking this
Alchemize its dullness,
When the sleek curls manifold
Flash all over into gold,
With a burnished fullness.

IV

Underneath my stroking hand,
Startled eyes of hazel bland
Kindling, growing larger,
Up thou leapest with a spring,
Full of prank and curveting,
Leaping like a charger.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

V

Leap ! thy broad tail waves a light,
Leap ! thy slender feet are bright,
 Canopied in fringes ;
Leap—those tasselled ears of thine
Flicker strangely, fair and fine,
 Down their golden inches.

VI

Yet, my pretty, sportive friend,
Little is 't to such an end
 That I praise thy rareness !
Other dogs may be thy peers
Haply in these drooping ears,
 And this glossy fairness,

VII

But of *thee* it shall be said,
This dog watched beside a bed
 Day and night unwearied,—
Watched within a curtained room,
Where no sunbeam brake the gloom
 Round the sick and dreary.

VIII

Roses, gathered for a vase,
In that chamber died apace,
 Beam and breeze resigning ;
This dog only, waited on,
Knowing that when light is gone
 Love remains for shining.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

IX

Other dogs in thymy dew
Tracked the hares and followed through
 Sunny moor or meadow ;
This dog only, crept and crept
Next a languid cheek that slept,
 Sharing in the shadow.

X

Other dogs of loyal cheer
Bounded at the whistle clear,
 Up the woodside hieing ;
This dog only, watched in reach
Of a faintly uttered speech,
 Or a louder sighing.

XI

And if one or two quick tears
Dropped upon his glossy ears,
 Or a sigh came double,—
Up he sprang in eager haste,
Fawning, fondling, breathing fast
 In a tender trouble.

XII

And this dog was satisfied
If a pale thin hand would glide
 Down his dewlaps sloping,—
Which he pushed his nose within,
After,—platforming his chin
 On the palm left open.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

XIII

This dog, if a friendly voice
Call him now to blyther choice
Than such chamber-keeping,
'Come out!' praying from the door,—
Presseth backward as before,
Up against me leaping.

XIV

Therefore to this dog will I,
Tenderly not scornfully,
Render praise and favour :
With my hand upon his head,
Is my benediction said
Therefore, and for ever.

XV

And because he loves me so,
Better than his kind will do
Often, man or woman,
Give I back more love again
Than dogs often take of men,
Leaning from my Human.

XVI

Blessings on thee, dog of mine,
Pretty collars make thee fine,
Sugared milk make fat thee !
Pleasures wag on in thy tail,
Hands of gentle motion fail
Nevermore, to pat thee !

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

XVII

Downy pillow take thy head,
Silken coverlid bestead,
Sunshine help thy sleeping!
No fly's buzzing wake thee up,
No man break thy purple cup,
Set for drinking deep in.

XVIII

Whiskered cats aointed flee,
Sturdy stoppers keep from thee
Cologne distillations;
Nuts lie in thy path for stones,
And thy feast-day macaroons
Turn to daily rations!

XIX

Mock I thee, in wishing weal?—
Tears are in my eyes to feel
Thou art made so straitly,
Blessing needs must straiten too,—
Little canst thou joy or do,
Thou who lovest *greatly*.

XX

Yet be blessèd to the height
Of all good and all delight
Pervious to thy nature;
Only *loved* beyond that line,
With a love that answers thine,
Loving fellow creature.

The Deserted Garden

I MIND me, in the days departed,
How often underneath the sun
With childish bounds I used to run
To a garden long deserted.

The beds and walks were vanished quite ;
And wheresoe'er had struck the spade,
The greenest grasses Nature laid,
To sanctify her right.

I called the place my wilderness,
For no one entered there but I ;
The sheep looked in, the grass to espy,
And passed it ne'ertheless.

The trees were interwoven wild,
And spread their boughs enough about
To keep both sheep and shepherd out,
But not a happy child.

Adventurous joy it was for me !
I crept beneath the boughs, and found
A circle smooth of mossy ground
Beneath a poplar tree.

Old garden rose-trees hedged it in,
Bedropt with roses waxen-white
Well satisfied with dew and light
And careless to be seen.

Long years ago it might befall,
When all the garden flowers were trim,
The grave old gardener prided him
On these the most of all.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

Some lady, stately overmuch,
Here moving with a silken noise,
Has blushed beside them at the voice
That likened her to such.

And these, to make a diadem,
She often may have plucked and twined,
Half-smiling as it came to mind
That few would look at *them*.

Oh, little thought that lady proud,
A child would watch her fair white rose,
When buried lay her whiter brows,
And silk was changed for shroud!—

Nor thought that gardener (full of scorns
For men unlearned and simple phrase),
A child would bring it all its praise
By creeping through the thorns!

To me upon my low moss seat,
Though never a dream the roses sent
Of science or love's compliment,
I ween they smelt as sweet,

It did not move my grief to see
The trace of human step departed:
Because the garden was deserted,
The blither place for me!

Friends, blame me not! a narrow ken
Has childhood 'twixt the sun and sward:
We draw the moral afterward—
We feel the gladness then,

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

And gladdest hours for me did glide
In silence at the rose-tree wall;
A thrush made gladness musical
Upon the other side.

Nor he nor I did e'er incline
To peck or pluck the blossoms white;
How should I know but roses might
Lead lives as glad as mine?

To make my hermit-home complete,
I brought clear water from the spring
Praised in its own low murmuring,
And cresses glossy wet.

And so, I thought, my likeness grew
(Without the melancholy tale)
To 'gentle hermit of the dale',
And Angelina too.

For oft I read within my nook
Such minstrel stories till the breeze
Made sounds poetic in the trees,—
And then I shut the book.

If I shut this wherein I write
I hear no more the wind athwart
Those trees,—nor feel that childish heart,
Delighting in delight.

My childhood from my life is parted,
My footsteps from the moss which drew
Its fairy circle round: anew
The garden is deserted.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

Another thrush may there rehearse
The madrigals which sweetest are ;
No more for me !—myself afar
Do sing a sadder verse.

Ah me, ah me ! when erst I lay
In that child's-nest so greenly wrought,
I laughed unto myself and thought
'The time will pass away'.

And still I laughed, and did not fear
But that, whene'er was past away
The childish time, some happier play
My womanhood would cheer.

I knew the time would pass away,
And yet, beside the rose-tree wall,
Dear God, how seldom, if at all,
Did I look up to pray !

The time is past ;—and now that grows
The cypress high among the trees,
And I behold white sepulchres
As well as the white rose,—

When graver, meeker thoughts are given,
And I have learnt to lift my face,
Reminded how earth's greenest place
The colour draws from heaven,—

It something saith for earthly pain,
But more for Heavenly promise free,
That I who was, would shrink to be
That happy child again.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

113.

Grief

I TELL you, hopeless grief is passionless ;
That only men incredulous of despair,
Half-taught in anguish, through the midnight air
Beat upward to God's throne in loud access
Of shrieking and reproach. Full desertness
In souls, as countries, lieth silent-bare
Under the blanching, vertical eye-glare
Of the absolute Heavens. Deep-hearted man, express
Grief for thy Dead in silence like to death :—
Most like a monumental statue set
In everlasting watch and moveless woe,
Till itself crumble to the dust beneath.
Touch it : the marble eyelids are not wet ;
If it could weep, it could arise and go.

HELEN SELINA, LADY DUFFERIN

1807-1867

114. *Lament of the Irish Emigrant*

I'M sittin' on the stile, Mary,
Where we sat side by side
On a bright May mornin' long ago,
When first you were my bride ;
The corn was springin' fresh and green,
And the lark sang loud and high—
And the red was on your lip, Mary,
And the love-light in your eye.

HELEN SELINA, LADY DUFFERIN

The place is little changed, Mary,
The day is bright as then,
The lark's loud song is in my ear,
And the corn is green again ;
But I miss the soft clasp of your hand
And your breath warm on my cheek,
And I still keep listnin' for the words
You never more will speak.

'Tis but a step down yonder lane,
And the little church stands near,
The church where we were wed, Mary,
I see the spire from here.
But the graveyard lies between, Mary,
And my step might break your rest—
For I've laid you, darling ! down to sleep,
With your baby on your breast.

I'm very lonely now, Mary,
For the poor make no new friends,
But, O, they love the better still
The few our Father sends !
And you were all *I* had, Mary,
My blessin' and my pride ;
There's nothin' left to care for now
Since my poor Mary died.

Yours was the good, brave heart, Mary,
That still went hoping on,
When the trust in God had left my soul,
And my arms' young strength was gone :

HELEN SELINA, LADY DUFFERIN

There was comfort ever on your lip,
And the kind look on your brow—
I bless you, Mary, for that same,
Though you cannot hear me now.

I thank you for the patient smile
When your heart was fit to break,
When the hunger pain was gnawin' there,
And you hid it for my sake !
I bless you for the pleasant word,
When your heart was sad and sore—
O, I'm thankful you are gone, Mary,
Where grief can't reach you more.

I'm biddin' you a long farewell,
My Mary, kind and true !
But I'll not forget you, darling !
In the land I'm goin' to ;
They say there's bread and work for all,
And the sun shines always there—
But I'll not forget old Ireland,
Were it fifty times as fair.

And often in those grand old woods
I'll sit, and shut my eyes,
And my heart will travel back again
To the place where Mary lies ;
And I'll think I see the little stile
Where we sat side by side :
And the springin' corn, and the bright May morn,
When first you were my bride.

THE HON. CAROLINE ELIZABETH
SARAH NORTON

1808-1877

115. *I Do Not Love Thee*

I DO not love thee!—no ! I do not love thee !
And yet when thou art absent I am sad ;
And envy even the bright blue sky above thee,
Whose quiet stars may see thee and be glad.

I do not love thee!—yet, I know not why,
Whate'er thou dost seems still well done, to me :
And often in my solitude I sigh
That those I do love are not more like thee !

I do not love thee!—yet, when thou art gone,
I hate the sound (though those who speak be dear)
Which breaks the lingering echo of the tone
Thy voice of music leaves upon my ear.

I do not love thee!—yet thy speaking eyes,
With their deep, bright and most expressive blue,
Between me and the midnight heaven arise,
Oftener than any eyes I ever knew.

I know I do not love thee ! yet, alas !
Others will scarcely trust my candid heart ;
And oft I catch them smiling as they pass,
Because they see me gazing where thou art.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË

1816-1855

116. *He Saw My Heart's Woe*

HE saw my heart's woe, discovered my soul's anguish,
How in fever, in thirst, in atrophy it pined ;
Knew he could heal, yet looked and let it languish,
To its moans spirit-deaf, to its pangs spirit-blind.

But once a year he heard a whisper low and dreary,
Appealing for aid, entreating some reply ;
Only when sick, soul-worn and torture-weary,
Breathed I that prayer—heard I that sigh.

He was mute as is the grave, he stood stirless as a tower ;
At last I looked up, and saw I prayed to stone :
I asked help of that which to help had no power,
I sought love where love was utterly unknown.

Idolater, I kneeled to an idol cut in rock,
I might have slashed my flesh and drawn my heart's
best blood,

The Granite God had felt no tenderness, no shock ;
My Baal had not seen nor heard nor understood.

In dark remorse I rose. I rose in darker shame,
Self-condemned I withdrew to an exile from my kind ;
A solitude I sought where mortal never came,
Hoping in its wilds forgetfulness to find.

Now, Heaven, heal the wound which I still deeply feel ;
Thy glorious hosts look not in scorn on our poor race ;
Thy King eternal doth no iron judgement deal
On suffering worms who seek forgiveness, comfort, grace

CHARLOTTE BRONTË

He gave our hearts to love, he will not love despise,
E'en if the gift be lost, as mine was long ago.
He will forgive the fault, will bid the offender rise,
Wash out with dews of bliss the fiery brand of woe ;

And give a sheltered place beneath the unsullied throne,
Whence the soul redeemed may mark Time's fleeting
course around earth ;
And know its trial overpast, its sufferings gone,
And feel the peril past of Death's immortal birth.

117.

Evening Solace

THE human heart has hidden treasures,
In secret kept, in silence sealed ;
The thoughts, the hopes, the dreams, the pleasures,
Whose charms were broken if revealed.
And days may pass in gay confusion,
And nights in rosy riot fly,
While, lost in Fame's or Wealth's illusion,
The memory of the Past may die.

But there are hours of lonely musing,
Such as in evening silence come,
When, soft as birds their pinions closing,
The heart's best feelings gather home.
Then in our souls there seems to languish
A tender grief that is not woe,
And thoughts that once wrung groans of anguish,
Now cause but some mild tears to flow.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË

And feelings, once as strong as passions,
Float softly back—a faded dream ;
Our own sharp griefs and wild sensations,
The tale of others' sufferings seem,
Oh ! when the heart is freshly bleeding,
How longs it for that time to be,
When, through the mist of years receding,
Its woes but live in reverie !

And it can dwell on moonlight glimmer,
On evening shade and loneliness ;
And, while the sky grows dim and dimmer,
Feel no untold and strange distress—
Only a deeper impulse given,
By lonely hour and darkened room,
To solemn thoughts that soar to heaven
Seeking a life and world to come.

118. *Speak of the North !*

SPEAK of the North ! A lonely moor
Silent and dark and trackless swells,
The waves of some wild streamlet pour
Hurriedly through its ferny dells.

Profoundly still the twilight air,
Lifeless the landscape ; so we deem,
Till like a phantom gliding near
A stag bends down to drink the stream.

And far away a mountain zone,
A cold, white waste of snow-drifts lies,
And one star, large and soft and lone,
Silently lights the unclouded skies.

EMILY BRONTË

1818-1848

119.

Remembrance

COLD in the earth—and the deep snow piled above thee,
Far, far removed, cold in the dreary grave!
Have I forgot, my only Love, to love thee,
Severed at last by Time's all-severing wave?

Now, when alone, do my thoughts no longer hover
Over the mountains, on that northern shore,
Resting their wings where heath and fern-leaves cover
Thy noble heart for ever, ever more?

Cold in the earth—and fifteen wild Decembers,
From those brown hills, have melted into spring:
Faithful, indeed, is the spirit that remembers
After such years of change and suffering!

Sweet Love of youth, forgive, if I forget thee,
While the world's tide is bearing me along;
Other desires and other hopes beset me,
Hopes which obscure, but cannot do thee wrong!

No later light has lightened up my heaven,
No second moon has ever shone for me;
All my life's bliss from thy dear life was given,
All my life's bliss is in the grave with thee.

But, when the days of golden dreams had perished,
And ev'n Despair was powerless to destroy;
Then did I learn how existence could be cherished,
Strengthened, and fed without the aid of joy.

EMILY BRONTË

Then did I check the tears of useless passion—
Weaned my young soul from yearning after thine ;
Sternly denied its burning wish to hasten
Down to that tomb already more than mine.

And, even yet, I dare not let it languish,
Dare not indulge in memory's rapturous pain ;
Once drinking deep of that divinest anguish,
How could I seek the empty world again ?

120.

The Visionary

SILENT is the house : all are laid asleep :
One alone looks out o'er the snow-wreaths deep,
Watching every cloud, dreading every breeze
That whirls the wildering drift, and bends the groaning
trees.

Cheerful is the hearth, soft the matted floor ;
Not one shivering gust creeps through pane or door ;
The little lamp burns straight, its rays shoot strong and far :
I trim it well, to be the wanderer's guiding star.

Frown, my haughty sire ! chide, my angry dame ;
Set your slaves to spy ; threaten me with shame !
But neither sire nor dame, nor prying serfs shall know
What angel nightly tracks that waste of frozen snow.

What I love shall come like visitant of air,
Safe in secret power from lurking human snare,
What loves me, no word of mine shall e'er betray,
Though for faith unstained my life must forfeit pay.

EMILY BRONTË

Burn, then, little lamp ; glimmer straight and clear—
Hush ! a rustling wing stirs, methinks, the air :
He for whom I wait, thus ever comes to me ;
Strange Power ! I trust thy might ; trust thou my constancy !

121. *Fall, Leaves, Fall*

FALL, leaves, fall ; die, flowers, away ;
Lengthen night and shorten day ;
Every leaf speaks bliss to me,
Fluttering from the autumn tree.
I shall smile when wreaths of snow
Blossom where the rose should grow ;
I shall sing when night's decay
Ushers in a drearier day.

122. *The Prisoner*

STILL let my tyrants know, I am not doom'd to wear
Year after year in gloom and desolate despair ;
A messenger of Hope comes every night to me,
And offers for short life, eternal liberty.

He comes with Western winds, with evening's wandering
airs,

With that clear dusk of heaven that brings the thickest stars :
Winds take a pensive tone, and stars a tender fire,
And visions rise, and change, that kill me with desire.

Desire for nothing known in my maturer years,
When Joy grew mad with awe, at counting future tears :
When, if my spirit's sky was full of flashes warm,
I knew not whence they came, from sun or thunder-storm.

EMILY BRONTË

But first, a hush of peace—a soundless calm descends ;
The struggle of distress and fierce impatience ends.
Mute music soothes my breast—unutter'd harmony
That I could never dream, till Earth was lost to me.

Then dawns the Invisible ; the Unseen its truth reveals ;
My outward sense is gone, my inward essence feels ;
Its wings are almost free—its home, its harbour found,
Measuring the gulf, it stoops, and dares the final bound.

O dreadful is the check—intense the agony—
When the ear begins to hear, and the eye begins to see ;
When the pulse begins to throb—the brain to think again—
The soul to feel the flesh, and the flesh to feel the chain.

Yet I would lose no sting, would wish no torture less ;
The more that anguish racks, the earlier it will bless ;
And robed in fires of hell, or bright with heavenly shine,
If it but herald Death, the vision is divine.

123. *Stanzas to [Branwell Brontë?]*

WELL, some may hate, and some may scorn,
And some may quite forget thy name ;
But my sad heart must ever mourn
Thy ruined hopes, thy blighted fame !
'Twas thus I thought, an hour ago,
Even weeping o'er that wretch's woe ;
One word turned back my gushing tears,
And lit my altered eye with sneers.
Then, ' Bless the friendly dust ', I said,
' That hides thy unlamented head !

EMILY BRONTË

Vain as thou wert, and weak as vain,
The slave of Falsehood, Pride, and Pain—
My heart has nought akin to thine ;
Thy soul is powerless over mine.’
But these were thoughts that vanished too ;
Unwise, unholy, and untrue :
Do I despise the timid deer,
Because his limbs are fleet with fear ?
Or, would I mock the wolf’s death-howl,
Because his form is gaunt and foul ?
Or, hear with joy the leveret’s cry,
Because it cannot bravely die ?
No ! Then above his memory
Let Pity’s heart as tender be ;
Say, ‘ Earth lie lightly on that breast,
And, kind Heaven, grant that spirit rest ! ’

124.

Often Rebuked

OFTEN rebuked, yet always back returning
To those first feelings that were born with me,
And leaving busy chase of wealth and learning
For idle dreams of things which cannot be :
To-day, I will seek not the shadowy region ;
Its unsustaining vastness waxes drear ;
And visions rising, legion after legion,
Bring the unreal world too strangely near.
I’ll walk, but not in old heroic traces,
And not in paths of high morality,
And not among the half-distinguished faces,
The clouded forms of long-past history.

EMILY BRONTË

I'll walk where my own nature would be leading :
It vexes me to choose another guide :
Where the grey flocks in ferny glens are feeding ;
Where the wild wind blows on the mountain-side.

What have those lonely mountains worth revealing ?
More glory and more grief than I can tell :
The earth that wakes one human heart to feeling
Can centre both the worlds of Heaven and Hell.

125.

Last Lines

NO coward soul is mine,
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere :
I see Heaven's glories shine,
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.

O God within my breast,
Almighty, ever-present Deity !
Life—that in me has rest,
As I—undying Life—have power in Thee !

Vain are the thousand creeds
That move men's hearts, unutterably vain,
Worthless as withered weeds,
Or idle froth amid the boundless main,

To waken doubt in one
Holding so fast by Thine infinity ;
So surely anchored on
The steadfast rock of immortality.

EMILY BRONTË

With wide-embracing love
Thy spirit animates eternal years,
Pervades and broods above,
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates, and rears.

Though earth and man were gone,
And suns and universes ceased to be,
And Thou were left alone,
Every existence would exist in Thee.

There is no room for Death,
Nor atom that his might could render void :
Thou—Thou art Being and Breath,
And what Thou art may never be destroyed.

JULIA WARD HOWE

1819-1911

126. *Battle-Hymn of the Republic*

MINE eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the
Lord :

He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath
are stored ;

He hath loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible swift
sword :

His truth is marching on.

I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling
camps ;

They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and
damps ;

I can read his righteous sentence by the dim and flaring
lamps :

His day is marching on.

JULIA WARD HOWE

I have read a fiery gospel, writ in burnished rows of steel :
' As ye deal with my contemners, so with you my grace
shall deal ;
Let the Hero, born of woman, crush the serpent with his
heel,
Since God is marching on.'

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call
retreat ;
He is sifting out the hearts of men before his judgement-
seat :
O, be swift, my soul, to answer Him ! be jubilant my feet !
Our God is marching on.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me :
As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,
While God is marching on.

127.

Our Orders

WEAVE no more silks, ye Lyons looms,
To deck our girls for gay delight !
The crimson flower of battle blooms,
And solemn marches fill the night.
Weave but the flag whose bars to-day
Drooped heavy o'er our early dead,
And homely garments, coarse and grey,
For orphans that must earn their bread !
Keep back your tunes, ye viols sweet,
That poured delight from other lands !
Rouse there the dancer's restless feet :
The trumpet leads our warrior bands.

JULIA WARD HOWE

And ye that wage the war of words
With mystic fame and subtle power,
Go, chatter to the idle birds
Or teach the lesson of the hour.

Ye Sibyl Arts, in one stern knot
Be all your offices combined !
Stand close, while Courage draws the lot,
The destiny of human kind.

And if that destiny could fail,
The sun should darken in the sky,
The eternal bloom of Nature pale,
And God, and Truth, and Freedom die !

ANNE BRONTË

1820-1849

128.

If This Be All

O GOD ! if this indeed be all
That Life can show to me ;
If on my aching brow may fall
No freshening dew from Thee ;

If with no brighter light than this
The lamp of hope may glow,
And I may only dream of bliss,
And wake to weary woe ;

If friendship's solace must decay,
When other joys are gone,
And love must keep so far away,
While I go wandering on,—

ANNE BRONTË

Wandering and toiling without gain,
The slave of others' will,
With constant care and frequent pain,
Despised, forgotten still ;

Grieving to look on vice and sin,
Yet powerless to quell
The silent current from within,
The outward torrent's swell ;

While all the good I would impart,
The feelings I would share,
Are driven backward to my heart,
And turned to wormwood there ;

If clouds must ever keep from sight
The glories of the Sun,
And I must suffer Winter's blight,
Ere Summer is begun :

If Life must be so full of care—
Then call me soon to Thee ;
Or give me strength enough to bear
My load of misery !

129. *In Memory of a Happy Day in
February*

I WAS alone, for those I loved
Were far away from me ;
The sun shone on the withered grass,
The wind blew fresh and free.

ANNE BRONTË

Was it the smile of early spring
That made my bosom glow?
'Twas sweet; but neither sun nor wind
Could cheer my spirit so.

Was it some feeling of delight,
All vague and undefined?
No; 'twas a rapture sweet and strong,
Expanding in the mind.

Was it a sanguine view of life,
And all its transient bliss,
A hope of bright prosperity?
Oh, no! it was not this.

It was a glimpse of truth divine
Unto my spirit given,
Illumined by a ray of light
That shone direct from heaven.

PHOEBE CARY

1824-1871

130. *One Sweetly Solemn Thought*

ONE sweetly solemn thought
Comes to me o'er and o'er;
I am nearer home to-day
Than I ever have been before;

Nearer my Father's house,
Where the many mansions be;
Nearer the great white throne,
Nearer the crystal sea;

PHOEBE CARY

Nearer the bound of life,
Where we lay our burdens down ;
Nearer leaving the cross,
Nearer gaining the crown !

But lying darkly between,
Winding down through the night,
Is the silent, unknown stream,
That leads at last to the light.

Closer and closer my steps
Come to the dread abysm :
Closer Death to my lips
Presses the awful chrism.

Oh, if my mortal feet
Have almost gained the brink ;
If it be I am nearer home
Even to-day than I think ;

Father, perfect my trust ;
Let my spirit feel in death,
That her feet are firmly set
On the rock of a living faith.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

1830-1894

131.

Song

WHEN I am dead, my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me ;
Plant thou no roses at my head,
Nor shady cypress tree :
Be the green grass above me
With showers and dewdrops wet ;
And if thou wilt, remember,
And if thou wilt, forget.

I shall not see the shadows,
I shall not feel the rain ;
I shall not hear the nightingale
Sing on, as if in pain :
And dreaming through the twilight
That doth not rise nor set,
Haply I may remember,
And haply may forget.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

132.

Sonnet

THE irresponsible silence of the land,
The irresponsible sounding of the sea,
Speak both one message of one sense to me:—
'Aloof, aloof, we stand aloof; so stand
Thou too aloof bound with the flawless band
Of inner solitude; we bind not thee;
But who from thy self-chain shall set thee free?
What heart shall touch thy heart? what hand thy hand?'
And I am sometimes proud and sometimes meek,
And sometimes I remember days of old
When fellowship seemed not so far to seek
And all the world and I seemed much less cold,
And at the rainbow's foot lay surely gold,
And hope felt strong and life itself not weak.

133.

Echo

COME to me in the silence of the night;
Come in the speaking silence of a dream;
Come with soft rounded cheeks and eyes as bright
As sunlight on a stream;
Come back in tears,
O memory, hope, love of finished years.

Oh dream how sweet, too sweet, too bitter sweet,
Whose wakening should have been in Paradise,
Where souls brimfull of love abide and meet;
Where thirsting longing eyes
Watch the slow door
That opening, letting in, lets out no more.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

Yet come to me in dreams, that I may live
My very life again though cold in death :
Come back to me in dreams, that I may give
Pulse for pulse, breath for breath :
Speak low, lean low,
As long ago, my love, how long ago !

134.

A Soul

SHE stands as pale as Parian statues stand ;
Like Cleopatra when she turned at bay,
And felt her strength above the Roman sway,
And felt the aspic writhing in her hand.
Her face is steadfast toward the shadowy land,
For dim beyond it looms the land of day :
Her feet are steadfast, all the arduous way
That foot-track doth not waver on the sand.
She stands there like a beacon through the night,
A pale clear beacon where the storm-drift is—
She stands alone, a wonder deathly-white.
She stands there patient nerved with inner might,
Indomitable in her feebleness,
Her face and will athirst against the light.

135.

Good Friday

AM I a stone and not a sheep
That I can stand, O Christ, beneath Thy Cross,
To number drop by drop Thy Blood's slow loss,
And yet not weep ?

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

Not so those women loved
Who with exceeding grief lamented Thee ;
Not so fallen Peter weeping bitterly ;
Not so the thief was moved ;

Not so the Sun and Moon
Which hid their faces in a starless sky,
A horror of great darkness at broad noon—
I, only I.

Yet give not o'er,
But seek Thy sheep, true Shepherd of the flock ;
Greater than Moses, turn and look once more
And smite a rock.

136.

Twice

I TOOK my heart in my hand
(O my love, O my love),
I said : Let me fall or stand,
Let me live or die,
But this once hear me speak—
(O my love, O my love)—
Yet a woman's words are weak ;
You should speak, not I.

You took my heart in your hand
With a friendly smile,
With a critical eye you scanned,
Then set it down,
And said : It is still unripe,
Better wait awhile ;
Wait while the skylarks pipe,
Till the corn grows brown.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

As you set it down it broke—
 Broke, but I did not wince ;
I smiled at the speech you spoke,
 At your judgement that I heard :
But I have not often smiled
 Since then, nor questioned since,
Nor cared for corn-flowers wild,
 Nor sung with the singing bird.

I take my heart in my hand,
 O my God, O my God,
My broken heart in my hand :
 Thou hast seen, judge Thou.
My hope was written on sand,
 O my God, O my God ;
Now let Thy judgement stand—
 Yea, judge me now.

This contemned of a man,
 This marred one heedless day,
This heart take Thou to scan
 Both within and without :
Refine with fire its gold,
 Purge Thou its dross away—
Yea, hold it in Thy hold,
 Whence none can pluck it out.

I take my heart in my hand—
 I shall not die, but live—
Before Thy face I stand ;
 I, for Thou callest such :

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

All that I have I bring,
All that I am I give,
Smile Thou and I shall sing,
But shall not question much.

137.

Rest

O EARTH, lie heavily upon her eyes ;
Seal her sweet eyes weary of watching, Earth ;
Lie close around her ; leave no room for mirth
With its harsh laughter, nor for sound of sighs.
She hath no questions, she hath no replies,
Hushed in and curtained with a blessed dearth
Of all that irked her from the hour of birth ;
With stillness that is almost Paradise.
Darkness more clear than noon-day holdeth her,
Silence more musical than any song ;
Even her very heart has ceased to stir :
Until the morning of Eternity
Her rest shall not begin nor end, but be ;
And when she wakes she will not think it long.

138.

Up-hill

D OES the road wind up-hill all the way ?
Yes, to the very end.
Will the day's journey take the whole long day ?
From morn to night, my friend.
But is there for the night a resting-place ?
A roof for when the slow dark hours begin.
May not the darkness hide it from my face ?
You cannot miss that inn.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?
Those who have gone before.
Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?
They will not keep you standing at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?
Of labour you shall find the sum.
Will there be beds for me and all who seek?
Yea, beds for all who come.

139.

Remember

REMEMBER me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by day
You tell me of our future that you planned:
Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be sad.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

140.

Bride-Song

(*From 'The Prince's Progress'*)

TOO late for love, too late for joy,
Too late, too late !
You loitered on the road too long,
You trifled at the gate :
The enchanted dove upon her branch
Died without a mate ;
The enchanted princess in her tower
Slept, died, behind the grate ;
Her heart was starving all this while
You made it wait.

Ten years ago, five years ago,
One year ago,
Even then you had arrived in time,
Though somewhat slow ;
Then you had known her living face
Which now you cannot know :
The frozen fountain would have leaped,
The buds gone on to blow,
The warm south wind would have awaked
To melt the snow.

Is she fair now as she lies ?
Once she was fair ;
Meet queen for any kingly king,
With gold-dust on her hair.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

Now these are poppies in her locks,
 White poppies she must wear ;
Must wear a veil to shroud her face
 And the want graven there :
Or is the hunger fed at length,
 Cast off the care ?

We never saw her with a smile
 Or with a frown ;
Her bed seemed never soft to her,
 Though tossed of down ;
She little heeded what she wore,
 Kirtle, or wreath, or gown ;
We think her white brows often ached
 Beneath her crown,
Till silvery hairs showed in her locks
 That used to be so brown.

We never heard her speak in haste :
 Her tones were sweet,
And modulated just so much
 As it was meet :
Her heart sat silent through the noise
 And concourse of the street.
There was no hurry in her hands,
 No hurry in her feet ;
There was no bliss drew nigh to her,
 That she might run to greet.

You should have wept her yesterday,
 Wasting upon her bed :
But wherefore should you weep to-day
 That she is dead ?

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

Lo, we who love weep not to-day,
But crown her royal head.
Let be these poppies that we strew,
Your roses are too red :
Let be these poppies, not for you
Cut down and spread.

141.

A Birthday

MY heart is like a singing bird
Whose nest is in a watered shoot ;
My heart is like an appletree
Whose boughs are bent with thickset fruit ;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
That paddles in a halcyon sea ;
My heart is gladder than all these
Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a dais of silk and down ;
Hang it with vair and purple dyes ;
Carve it in doves, and pomegranates,
And peacocks with a hundred eyes ;
Work it in gold and silver grapes,
In leaves, and silver fleurs-de-lys ;
Because the birthday of my life
Is come, my love is come to me.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

142.

Amor Mundi

‘O H where are you going with your love-locks flowing,
On the west wind blowing along this valley track?’
‘The downhill path is easy, come with me an it please ye,
We shall escape the uphill by never turning back.’

So they two went together in glowing August weather,
The honey-breathing heather lay to their left and right;
And dear she was to doat on, her swift feet seemed to
float on

The air like soft twin pigeons too sportive to alight.

‘Oh, what is that in heaven where grey cloud-flakes are
seven,

Where blackest clouds hang riven just at the rainy
skirt?’

‘Oh, that’s a meteor sent us, a message dumb, portentous,
An undeciphered solemn signal of help or hurt.’

‘Oh, what is that glides quickly where the velvet flowers
grow thickly,

Their scent comes rich and sickly?’ ‘A scaled and
hooded worm.’

‘Oh, what’s that in the hollow, so pale I quake to follow?’

‘Oh, that’s a thin dead body which waits the eternal
term.’

‘Turn again, O my sweetest,—turn again, false and fleetest:
This way whereof thou weetest, I fear is hell’s own track.’

‘Nay, too steep for hill-mounting; nay, too late for cost-
counting:

This downhill path is easy, but there’s no turning back.’

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

143.

In Progress

TEN years ago it seemed impossible
That she should ever grow so calm as this,
With self-remembrance in her warmest kiss
And dim dried eyes like an exhausted well.
Slow-speaking when she has some fact to tell,
Silent with long-unbroken silences,
Centred in self yet not unpleased to please,
Gravely monotonous like a passing bell.
Mindful of drudging daily common things,
Patient at pastime, patient at her work,
Wearing perhaps but strenuous certainly.
Sometimes I fancy we may one day see
Her head shoot forth seven stars from where they lurk,
And her eyes lightnings and her shoulders wings.

144.

What would I give !

WHAT would I give for a heart of flesh to warm me
through,
Instead of this heart of stone ice-cold whatever I do ;
Hard and cold and small, of all hearts the worst of all.

What would I give for words, if only words would come ;
But now in its misery my spirit has fallen dumb :
Oh, merry friends, go your way, I have never a word to say.

What would I give for tears, not smiles but scalding tears,
To wash the black mark clean, and to thaw the frost of years,
To wash the stain ingrain, and to make me clean again.

145. *The High Tide on the Coast of
Lincolnshire (1571)*

THE old mayor climbed the belfry tower,
The ringers ran by two, by three ;
' Pull, if ye never pulled before ;
Good ringers, pull your best,' quoth he.
' Play uppe, play uppe, O Boston bells !
Ply all your changes, all your swells,
Play uppe *The Brides of Enderby* !

Men say it was a stolen tyde—
The Lord that sent it, He knows all ;
But in myne ears doth still abide
The message that the bells let fall :
And there was nought of strange, beside
The flights of mews and pewits pied
By millions crouch'd on the old sea wall.

I sat and spun within the doore,
My thread brake off, I raised myne eyes,
The level sun, like ruddy ore,
Lay sinking in the barren skies ;
And dark against day's golden death
She moved where Lindis wandereth,
My sonne's faire wife, Elizabeth.

' Cussha ! Cussha ! Cussha !' calling,
Ere the early dews were falling,
Farre away I heard her song.
' Cussha ! Cussha !' all along ;

JEAN INGELow

Where the reedy Lindis floweth,
 Floweth, floweth,
From the meads where melick groweth
Faintly came her milking song,—
‘Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!’ calling,
‘For the dews will soone be falling;
Leave your meadow grasses mellow,
 Mellow, mellow;
Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow;
Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Lightfoot,
Quit the stalks of parsley hollow,
 Hollow, hollow;
Come uppe Jetty, rise and follow,
From the clovers lift your head;
Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Lightfoot,
Come uppe Jetty, rise and follow,
Jetty, to the milking shed.’

If it be long, aye, long ago,
 When I beginne to think howe long,
Againe I hear the Lindis flow,
 Swift as an arrowe, sharpe and strong;
And all the aire, it seemeth mee,
Bin full of floating bells (sayth shee),
That ring the tune of Enderby.

Alle fresh the level pasture lay,
 And not a shadowe mote be seene,
Save where full fyve good miles away
 The steeple towered from out the greene;
And lo! the great bell far and wide
Was heard in all the countryside
That Saturday at eventide.

JEAN INGELow

The swannerds where their sedges are
Moved on in sunset's golden breath,
The shepherde lads I heard afarre,
And my sonne's wife, Elizabeth ;
Till floating o'er the grassy sea
Came down that kyndly message free,
The Brides of Mavis Enderby.

Then some looked uppe into the sky,
And all along where Lindis flows
To where the goodly vessels lie,
And where the lordly steeple shows.
They sayde, 'And why should this thing be ?
What danger lowers by land or sea ?
They ring the tune of Enderby !

' For evil news from Mablethorpe
Of pyrate galleys warping down ;
For shippes ashore beyond the scorpe,
They have not spared to wake the towne :
But while the west bin red to see,
And storms be none, and pyrates flee,
Why ring *The Brides of Enderby* ? '

I looked without, and lo ! my sonne
Came riding downe with might and main :
He raised a shout as he drew on,
Till all the welkin rang again,
' Elizabeth ! Elizabeth ! '
(A sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth.)

JEAN INGELow

‘The olde sea wall (he cried) is downe,
The rising tide comes on apace,
And boats adrift in yonder towne
Go sailing uppe the market place!
He shook as one that looks on death:
‘God save you, mother!’ straight he saith;
‘Where is my wife, Elizabeth?’

‘Good sonne, where Lindis winds away
With her two bairns I marked her long;
And ere yon bells beganne to play
Afar I heard her milking song.’
He looked across the grassy lea,
To right, to left, ‘Ho Enderby!’
They rang *The Brides of Enderby*!

With that he cried and beat his breast;
For, lo! along the river’s bed
A mighty eygre reared his crest,
And uppe the Lindis raging sped.
It swept with thunderous noises loud;
Shaped like a curling snow-white cloud,
Or like a demon in a shroud.

And rearing Lindis backward pressed
Shook all her trembling bankes amaine;
Then madly ay the eygre’s breast
Flung uppe her weltering walls again.
Then bankes came downe with ruin and rout—
Then beaten foam flew round about—
Then all the mighty floods were out.

JEAN INGELow

So farre, so fast the eygre drave,
The heart had hardly time to beat,
Before a shallow seething wave
Sobbed in the grasses at oure feet:
The feet had hardly time to flee
Before it brake against the knee,
And all the world was in the sea.

Upon the roofe we sat that night,
The noise of bells went sweeping by:
I marked the lofty beacon light
Stream from the church tower, red and high—
A lurid mark and dread to see;
And awsome bells they were to mee,
That in the dark rang *Enderby*.

They rang the sailor lads to guide
From roofe to roofe who fearless rowed;
And I—my sonne was at my side,
And yet the ruddy beacon glowed:
And yet he moaned beneath his breath,
'O come in life, or come in death!
O lost! my love, Elizabeth.'

And didst thou visit him no more?
Thou didst, thou didst, my daughter deare;
The waters laid thee at his doore,
Ere yet the early dawn was clear.
Thy pretty bairns in fast embrace,
The lifted sun shone on thy face,
Downe drifted to thy dwelling-place.

JEAN INGELow

That flow strewed wrecks about the grass,
That ebbe swept out the flocks to sea ;
A fatal ebbe and flow, alas !

To manye more than myne and me :
But each will mourn his own (she saith) ;
And sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth.

I shall never hear her more
By the reedy Lindis shore,
'Cusha ! Cusha ! Cusha !' calling,
Ere the early dewes be falling ;
I shall never hear her song,
'Cusha ! Cusha !' all along,
Where the sunny Lindis floweth,
Goeth, floweth ;
From the meads where melick groweth,
When the water winding down
Onward floweth to the town.

I shall never see her more
Where the reeds and rushes quiver,
Shiver, quiver ;
Stand beside the sobbing river,
Sobbing, throbbing, in its falling,
To the sandy lonesome shore ;
I shall never hear her calling,
'Leave your meadow grasses mellow,
Mellow, mellow ;
Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow ;
Come uppe Whitefoot, come uppe Lightfoot ;
Quit your pipes of parsley hollow,
Hollow, hollow ;

JEAN INGELow

Come uppe Lightfoot, rise and follow ;
Lightfoot, Whitefoot,
From your clovers lift the head ;
Come uppe Jetty, follow, follow ;
Jetty, to the milking shed.'

LADY CURRIE (VIOLET FANE)

1843-1905

146.

Forbidden Love

O H, love ! thou that shelterest some
'Neath thy wings, so white and warm,
Wherefore on a bat-like wing
All disguisèd didst thou come
In so terrible a form ?
As a dark forbidden thing,
As a demon of the air—
As a sorrow and a sin,
Wherefore cam'st thou thus to me,
As a tempter and a snare ?
When the heart that beats within
This, my bosom, warm'd to thee,
Was it from a love of sinning,
From a fatal love of wrong,
From a wish to shun the light ?
Nay ! I swear at the beginning
Hadst thou sung an angel's song,—
Had this wrong thing been the right,
Thou hadst seem'd as worth the winning,
And with will as firm and strong
I had lov'd with all my might.

THE HON. EMILY LAWLESS

1845-1913

147. *Fontenoy (1745)*

After the Battle: early dawn, Clare coast

‘*MARY* mother, shield us! Say, what men are ye,
Sweeping past so swiftly in this morning sea?’

‘Without sails or rowlocks merrily we glide
Home to Corca Bascuin on the brimming-tide.’

‘*Jesus* save you, gentry! why are ye so white,
Sitting all so straight and still in this misty light?’

‘Nothing ails us, brother; joyous souls are we,
Sailing home together, on the morning sea.

‘Cousins, friends, and kinsfolk, children of the land,
Here we come together, a merry, rousing band;
Sailing home together from the last great fight,
Home to Clare from Fontenoy, in the morning light.

‘Men of Corca Bascuin, men of Clare’s Brigade,
Harken, stony hills of Clare, hear the charge we made;
See us come together, singing from the fight,
Home to Corca Bascuin, in the morning light.’

FANNY PARNELL

1854-1882

148.

After Death

SHALL mine eyes behold thy glory, O my country?
Shall mine eyes behold thy glory?
Or shall the darkness close around them ere the
sunblaze break at last upon thy story?

When the nations ope for thee their queenly circle, as a new
sweet sister hail thee,
Shall these lips be seal'd in callous death and
silence, that have known but to bewail thee?

Shall the ear be deaf that only loved thy praises when
all men their tribute bring thee?
Shall the mouth be clay that sang thee in thy
squalor when all poets' mouths shall sing thee?

Ah! the harpings and the salvoes and the shouting of thy
exiled sons returning!
I should hear though dead and mouldered, and the
grave-damps should not chill my bosom's burning.

Ah! the tramp of feet victorious! I should hear
them 'mid the shamrocks and the mosses,
And my heart would toss within the shroud and quiver
as a captive dreamer tosses.

I should turn and rend the cere-clothes round
me, giant sinews I should borrow—
Crying, 'O my brothers, I have also loved
her in her loneliness and sorrow!

FANNY PARNELL

‘ Let me join with you the jubilant procession ;
let me chant with you her story ;
Then contented I shall go back to the shamrocks,
now mine eyes have seen her glory ! ’

MARY ELIZABETH COLERIDGE

1861-1907

149.

A Moment

THE clouds had made a crimson crown
About the mountains high.
The stormy sun was going down
In a stormy sky.

Why did you let your eyes so rest on me,
And hold your breath between ?
In all the ages this can never be
As if it had not been.

150.

Gone

ABOUT the little chambers of my heart
Friends have been coming—going—many a year.
The doors stand open there.
Some, lightly stepping, enter ; some depart.

Freely they come and freely go, at will.
The walls give back their laughter ; all day long
They fill the house with song.
One door alone is shut, one chamber still.

MARY ELIZABETH COLERIDGE

151.

Unwelcome

WE were young, we were merry, we were very very
wise,

And the door stood open at our feast,
When there passed us a woman with the West in her eyes,
And a man with his back to the East.

O still grew the hearts that were beating so fast,
The loudest voice was still.

The jest died away on our lips as they passed,
And the rays of July struck chill.

The cups of red wine turned pale on the board,
The white bread black as soot,
The hound forgot the hand of her lord,
She fell down at his foot.

Now let me lie where the dead dog lies,
Ere I sit me down again at a feast,
When there passes a woman with the West in her eyes,
And a man with his back to the East.

AMY LEVY

1861-1889

152.

A London Plane-Tree

GREEN is the plane-tree in the square,
The other trees are brown;
They droop and pine for country air,
The plane-tree loves the town.

AMY LEVY

Here from my garret-pane I mark
The plane-tree bud and blow,
Shed her recuperative bark,
And spread her shade below.

Among her branches, in and out,
The city breezes play ;
The dull fog wraps her round about ;
Above, the smoke curls grey.

Others the country take for choice,
And hold the town in scorn ;
But she has listen'd to the voice
On city breezes borne.

153.

In September

THE sky is silver-grey ; the long
Slow waves caress the shore.
On such a day as this I have been glad,
Who shall be glad no more.

154.

In the Nower

DEEP in the grass outstretched I lie,
Motionless on the hill ;
Above me is a cloudless sky,
Around me all is still :

There is no breath, no sound, no stir,
The drowsy peace to break ;
I close my tired eyes—it were
So simple not to wake.

155. *Cambridge in the Long*

WHERE drowsy sound of college-chimes
 Across the air is blown,
 And drowsy fragrance of the limes,
 I lie and dream alone.

A dazzling radiance reigns o'er all—
 O'er gardens densely green,
 O'er old grey bridges and the small,
 Slow flood which slides between.

This is the place; it is not strange,
 But known of old and dear.
 What went I forth to seek? The change
 Is mine; why am I here?

Alas, in vain I turned away,
 I fled the town in vain;
 The strenuous life of yesterday
 Calleth me back again.

And was it peace I came to seek?
 Yet here, where memories throng,
 Ev'n here, I know the past is weak,
 I know the present strong.

This drowsy fragrance, silent heat,
 Suit not my present mind,
 Whose eager thought goes out to meet
 The life it left behind.

AMY LEVY

Spirit with sky to change ; such hope,
An idle one we know ;
Unship the oars, make loose the rope,
Push off the boat and go . . .

Ah, would what binds me could have been
Thus loosened at a touch !
This pain of living is too keen,
Of loving, is too much.

156.

New Love, New Life

I

SHE, who so long has lain
Stone-stiff with folded wings,
Within my heart again
The brown bird wakes and sings.

Brown nightingale, whose strain
Is heard by day, by night,
She sings of joy and pain,
Of sorrow and delight.

II

'Tis true,—in other days
Have I unbarred the door ;
He knows the walks and ways
Love has been here before.

Love blest and love accurst
Was here in days long past ;
This time is not the first,
But this time is the last.

AMY LEVY

157.

London Poets

THEY trod the streets and squares where now I tread,
With weary hearts, a little while ago ;
When, thin and grey, the melancholy snow
Clung to the leafless branches overhead ;
Or when the smoke-veil'd sky grew stormy-red
In Autumn ; with a re-arisen woe
Wrestled, what time the passionate spring-winds blow ;
And paced scorch'd stones in summer. They are dead.
The sorrow of their souls to them did seem
As real as mine to me, as permanent.
To-day—it is the shadow of a dream,
The half-forgotten breath of breezes spent.
So shall another soothe his woe supreme—
No more he comes, who this way came and went.

DORA SIGERSON SHORTER

1866-1918

158.

Sixteen Dead Men

HARK ! in the still night. Who goes there ?
' *Fifteen dead men.*' Why do they wait ?
' *Hasten, comrade, death is so fair.*'
Now comes their Captain through the dim gate.
Sixteen dead men ! What on their sword ?
' *A nation's honour proud do they bear.*'
What on their bent heads ? ' *God's holy word ;*
All of their nation's heart blended in prayer.'

DORA SIGERSON SHORTER

Sixteen dead men ! What makes their shroud ?

' All of their nation's love wraps them around.'

Where do their bodies lie, brave and so proud ?

' Under the gallows-tree in prison-ground.'

Sixteen dead men ! Where do they go ?

' To join their regiment where Sarsfield leads ;

Wolfe Tone and Emmet, too, well do they know.

There shall they bivouac, telling great deeds.'

Sixteen dead men ! Shall they return ?

' Yea, they shall come again, breath of our breath.

They on our nation's hearth made old fires burn.

Guard her unconquered soul, strong in their death.'

159.

.Ireland

'TWAS the dream of a God,
And the mould of His hand,
That you shook 'neath this stroke,
That you trembled and broke
To this beautiful land.

Here He loosed from His hold

A brown tumult of wings,

Till the wind on the sea

Bore the strange melody

Of an island that sings.

He made you all fair,

You in purple and gold,

You in silver and green,

Till no eye that has seen

Without love can behold.

DORA SIGERSON SHORTER

I have left you behind
In the path of the past,
With the white breath of flowers,
With the best of God's hours,
I have left you at last.

ALICE MEYNELL

160. *In Manchester Square*

(*In memoriam T. H.*)

THE paralytic man has dropped in death
The crossing-sweeper's brush to which he clung,
One-handed, twisted, dwarfed, scanted of breath,
Although his hair was young.

I saw this year the winter vines of France,
Dwarfed, twisted, goblins in the frosty drouth,
Gnarled, crippled, blackened little stems askance,
On long hills to the South.

Great green and golden hands of leaves ere long
Shall proffer clusters in that vineyard wide.
And oh! his might, his sweet, his wine, his song,
His stature, since he died!

161. *Christ in the Universe*

WITH this ambiguous earth
His dealings have been told us. These abide:
The signal to a maid, the human birth,
The lesson, and the young Man crucified.

ALICE MEYNELL

But not a star of all
The innumerable host of stars has heard
How He administered this terrestrial ball.
Our race have kept their Lord's entrusted Word.

Of His earth-visiting feet
None knows the secret, cherished, perilous,
The terrible, shamefast, frightened, whispered, sweet,
Heart-shattering secret of His way with us.

No planet knows that this
Our wayside planet, carrying land and wave,
Love and life multiplied, and pain and bliss,
Bears, as chief treasure, one forsaken grave.

Nor, in our little day,
May His devices with the heavens be guessed,
His pilgrimage to thread the Milky Way
Or His bestowals there be manifest.

But in the eternities,
Doubtless we shall compare together, hear
A million alien Gospels, in what guise
He trod the Pleiades, the Lyre, the Bear.

O, be prepared, my soul!
To read the inconceivable, to scan
The countless forms of God those stars unroll
When, in our turn, we show to them a Man.

162.

Renouncement

I MUST not think of thee ; and, tired yet strong,
 I shun the thought that lurks in all delight—
 The thought of thee—and in the blue Heaven's height,
 And in the sweetest passage of a song.

Oh, just beyond the fairest thoughts that throng
 This breast, the thought of thee waits, hidden tho' bright ;
 Yet it must never, never come in sight ;
 I must stop short of thee the whole day long.

But when sleep comes to close each difficult day,
 When night gives pause to the long watch I keep,
 And all my bonds I needs must loose apart,

Must doff my will as raiment laid away,—
 With the first dream that comes with the first sleep
 I run, I run, I am gathered to thy heart.

163. *A Letter from a Girl to Her own
 Old Age*

LISTEN, and when thy hand this paper presses,
 O time-worn woman, think of her who blesses
 What thy thin fingers touch, with her caresses.

O mother, for the weight of years that break thee !
 O daughter, for slow time must yet awake thee,
 And from the changes of my heart must make thee.

O fainting traveller, morn is grey in heaven.
 Dost thou remember how the clouds were driven ?
 And are they calm about the fall of even ?

ALICE MEYNELL

Pause near the ending of thy long migration,
For this one sudden hour of desolation
Appeals to one hour of thy meditation.

Suffer, O silent one, that I remind thee
Of the great hills that stormed the sky behind thee,
Of the wild winds of power that have resigned thee.

Know that the mournful plain where thou must wander
Is but a grey and silent world, but ponder
The misty mountains of the morning yonder.

Listen :—the mountain winds with rain were fretting,
And sudden gleams the mountain-tops besetting.
I cannot let thee fade to death, forgetting.

What part of this wild heart of mine I know not
Will follow with thee where the great winds blow not,
And where the young flowers of the mountain grow not.

Yet let my letter with thy lost thoughts in it
Tell what the way was when thou didst begin it,
And win with thee the goal when thou shalt win it.

Oh, in some hour of thine my thoughts shall guide thee.
Suddenly, though time, darkness, silence, hide thee,
This wind from thy lost country flits beside thee,—

Telling thee : all thy memories moved the maiden,
With thy regrets was morning over-shaden,
With sorrow, thou hast left, her life was laden.

But whither shall my thoughts turn to pursue thee ?
Life changes, and the years and days renew thee.
Oh, Nature brings my straying heart unto thee ;

ALICE MEYNELL

Her winds will join us, with their constant kisses
Upon the evening as the morning tresses,
Her summers breathe the same unchanging blisses.

And we, so altered in our shifting phases,
Track one another 'mid the many mazes
By the eternal child-breath of the daisies.

I have not writ this letter of divining
To make a glory of thy silent pining,
A triumph of thy mute and strange declining.

Only one youth, and the bright life was shrouded.
Only one morning, and the day was clouded.
And one old age with all regrets is crowded.

Oh hush, oh hush! Thy tears my words are steeping.
Oh hush, hush, hush! So full, the fount of weeping?
Poor eyes, so quickly moved, so near to sleeping?

Pardon the girl; such strange desires beset her.
Poor woman, lay aside the mournful letter
That breaks thy heart; the one who wrote, forget her:

The one who now thy faded features guesses,
With filial fingers thy grey hair caresses,
With morning tears thy mournful twilight blesses.

164.

Chimes

BRIEF, on a flying night,
From the shaken tower,
A flock of bells take flight,
And go with the hour.

ALICE MEYNELL

Like birds from the cote to the gales,
Abrupt—O hark!

A fleet of bells set sails,
And go to the dark.

Sudden the cold airs swing.
Alone, aloud,

A verse of bells takes wing
And flies with the cloud.

MARGARET L. WOODS

165. *To the Forgotten Dead*

TO the forgotten dead,
Come, let us drink in silence ere we part.
To every fervent yet resolvèd heart
That brought its tameless passion and its tears,
Renunciation and laborious years,
To lay the deep foundations of our race;
To rear its mighty ramparts overhead
And light its pinnacles with golden grace.
To the unhonoured dead.

To the forgotten dead,
What dauntless hands were stretched to grasp the rein
Of Fate and hurl into the void again
Her thunder-hoofed horses, rushing blind
Earthward along the courses of the wind.
Among the stars along the wind in vain
Their souls were scattered and their blood was shed,
And nothing, nothing of them doth remain.
To the thrice-perished dead.

MARGARET L. WOODS

166.

Genius Loci

PEACE, Shepherd, peace ! What boots it singing on ?
Since long ago grace-giving Phoebus died,
And all the train that loved the stream-bright side
Of the poetic mount with him are gone
Beyond the shores of Styx and Acheron,
In unexplorèd realms of night to hide.
The clouds that show their shadows far and wide
Are all of Heaven that visits Helicon.

Yet here, where never muse or god did haunt,
Still may some nameless power of Nature stray,
Pleased with the reedy stream's continual chant
And purple pomp of these broad fields in May.
The shepherds meet him where he herds the kine,
And careless pass him by whose is the gift divine.

167.

A Ballade of the Night

FAR from the earth the deep-descended day
Lies dim in hidden sanctuaries of sleep.
The wingèd winds couched on the threshold keep
Uneasy watch, and still expectant stay
The voice that bids their rushing host delay
No more to rise, and with tempestuous power
Rend the wide veil of heaven. Long watching they
Sigh in the silence of the midnight hour.

Hark ! where the forests slow in slumber sway
Below the blue wild ridges, steep on steep,
Thronging the sky—how shuddering as they leap
The impetuous waters go their fated way.

MARGARET L. WOODS

And mourn in mountain chasms, and as they stray
By many a magic town and marble tower,
As those that still unreconciled obey,
Sigh in the silence of the midnight hour.

Listen—the quiet darkness doth array
The toiling earth, and there is time to weep—
A deeper sound is mingled with the sweep
Of streams and winds that whisper far away.
Oh listen ! where the populous cities lay
Low in the lap of sleep their ancient dower,
The changeless spirit of our changeful clay
Sighs in the silence of the midnight hour.

Sigh, watcher for a dawn remote and grey,
Mourn, journeyer to an undesired deep,
Eternal sower, thou that shalt not reap,
Immortal, whom the plagues of God devour.
Mourn—'tis the hour when thou wert wont to pray.
Sigh in the silence of the midnight hour.

ROSE TERRY COOKE

168.

Arachne

I WATCH her in the corner there,
As, restless, bold, and unafraid,
She slips and floats along the air
Till all her subtile house is made.

Her home, her bed, her daily food,
All from that hidden store she draws ;
She fashions it and knows it good,
By instinct's strong and sacred laws.

ROSE TERRY COOKE

No tenuous threads to weave her nest,
She seeks and gathers there or here,
But spins it from her faithful breast,
Renewing still, till leaves are sere.

Then, worn with toil and tired of life,
In vain her shining traps are set.
The frost hath hushed the insect strife
And gilded flies her charm forget.

But swinging in the snares she spins,
She sways to every wintry wind :
Her joy, her toil, her errand done,
Her corse the sport of storms unkind.

Poor sister of the spinster clan,
I too from out my store within
My daily life and living plan,
My home, my rest, my pleasure spin.

I know thy heart when heartless hands
Sweep all that hard-earned web away,
Destroy its pearled and glittering bands,
And leave thee homeless by the way.

I know thy peace when all is done,
Each anchored thread, each tiny knot,
Soft shining in the autumn sun ;
A sheltered, silent, tranquil lot.

I know what thou hast never known,—
Sad presage to a soul allowed—
That not for life I spin, alone,
But day by day I spin my shroud.

VIOLET JACOB

169. *Tam i' the Kirk*

O JEAN, my Jean, when the bell ca's the congregation
Owre valley-an' hill wi' the ding frae its iron mou',
When a' body's thochts is set on his ain salvation,
Mine's set on you.

There's a reid rose lies on the Buik o' the Word afore ye
That was growin' braw on its bush at the keek o' day,
But the lad that pu'd yon flower i' the mornin's glory,
He canna pray.

He canna pray; but there's nane i' the kirk will heed him
Whaur he sits sae still his lane at the side o' the wa',
For nane but the reid rose kens what my lassie gie'd him—
It an' us twa!

He canna sing for the sang that his ain he'rt raises,
He canna see for the mist that's afore his een,
An' a voice drouns the hale o' the psalms an' the paraphrases,
Cryin' 'Jean, Jean, Jean!'

ANNA BUNSTON DE BARY

170. *The Snowdrop*

CLOSE to the sod
There can be seen
A thought of God
In white and green.

Unmarred, unsoiled
It cleft the clay,
Serene, unspoiled
It views the day.

ANNA BUNSTON DE BARY

It is so holy
And yet so lowly.
Would you enjoy
Its grace and dower
And not destroy
The living flower?
Then you must, please,
Fall on your knees.

MOIRA O'NEILL

171. *The Rachray Man*

OCH, what was it got me at all that time
To promise I'd marry a Rachray man?
An' now he'll not listen to rason or rhyme,
He's striving to hurry me all that he can.
'Come on, an' ye *be* to come on!' say he,
'Ye're bound for the Island to live wi' me.'

See Rachray Island beyont in the bay,
And the dear knows what they be doin' out there
But fishin' and fightin' and tearin' away,
An' who's to hinder, an' what do they care?
The goodness can tell what 'ud happen to me
When Rachray 'ud have me, *anee, anee!*

I might have took Pether from over the hill,
A dacent poacher, the kind, poor boy:
Could I keep the ould places about me still
I'd never set foot out of sweet Ballyvoy.
My sorra on Rachray, the could sea-caves,
An' blackneck divers, an' weary ould waves!

MOIRA O'NEILL

I'll never win back now, whatever may fall,
So give me good luck, for ye'll see me no more ;
Sure an Island man is the mischief an' all—
An' me that was never married before !
Oh think o' my fate when ye dance at a fair,
In Rachray, there's no Christianity there.

172.

The Grand Match

DENNIS was hearty when Dennis was young,
High was his step in the jig that he sprung,
He had the looks an' the sootherin' tongue—
An' he wanted a girl wid a fortune.

Nannie was grey-eyed an' Nannie was tall,
Fair was the face hid inunder her shawl,
'Troth ! an' he liked her the best o' them all—
But she'd not a *traneen* to her fortune.

He be to look out for a likelier match,
So he married a girl that was counted a catch,
An' as ugly as need be, the dark little patch—
But that was a trifle, he told her.

She brought him her good-lookin' gold to admire,
She brought him her good-lookin' cows to his byre,
But far from good-lookin' she sat by his fire—
An' paid him that 'thrifle' he tould her.

He met pretty Nan when a month had gone by,
An' he thought, like a fool, to get round her he'd try ;
Wid a smile on her lip an' a spark in her eye,
She said, 'How is the woman that owns ye?'

MOIRA O'NEILL

Och, never be tellin' the life that he's led !
Sure, many's the night that he'll wish himself dead,
For the sake of two eyes in a pretty girl's head,—
An' the tongue of the woman that owns him.

FRANCES CORNFORD

173. *Autumn Evening*

THE shadows flickering, the daylight dying,
And I upon the old red sofa lying,
The great brown shadows leaping up the wall,
The sparrows twittering ; and that is all.

I thought to send my soul to far-off lands,
Where fairies scamper on the windy sands,
Or where the autumn rain comes drumming down
On huddled roofs in an enchanted town.

But O, my sleepy soul, it will not roam,
It is too happy and too warm at home :
With just the shadows leaping up the wall,
The sparrows twittering ; and that is all.

174. *Autumn Morning at Cambridge*

I RAN out in the morning, when the air was clean and
new,
And all the grass was glittering and grey with autumn dew,
I ran out to the apple tree and pulled an apple down,
And all the bells were ringing in the old grey town.

FRANCES CORNFORD

Down in the town, off the bridges and the grass
They are sweeping up the leaves to let the people pass,
Sweeping up the old leaves, golden-reds and browns,
While the men go to lecture with the wind in their gowns

175.

The Watch

I WAKENED on my hot, hard bed ;
Upon the pillow lay my head ;
Beneath the pillow I could hear .
My little watch was ticking clear.
I thought the throbbing of it went
Like my continual discontent,
I thought it said in every tick :
I am so sick, so sick, so sick ;
O death, come quick, come quick, come quick,
Come quick, come quick, come quick, come quick.

EVA GORE-BOOTH

176. *The Little Waves of Breffny*

THE grand road from the mountain goes shining to
the sea,
And there is traffic in it, and many a horse and cart ;
But the little roads of Cloonagh are dearer far to me,
And the little roads of Cloonagh go rambling through
my heart.

EVA GORE-BOOTH

A great storm from the ocean goes shouting o'er the hill,
And there is glory in it and terror on the wind ;
But the haunted air of twilight is very strange and still,
And the little winds of twilight are dearer to my mind.

The great waves of the Atlantic sweep storming on their
way,
Shining green and silver with the hidden herring shoal ;
But the little waves of Breffny have drenched my heart
in spray,
And the little waves of Breffny go stumbling through
my soul.

KATHARINE TYNAN HINKSON

177. *Sheep and Lambs*

ALL in the April morning,
April airs were abroad,
The sheep with their little lambs
Pass'd me by on the road.

The sheep with their little lambs
Pass'd me by on the road ;
All in an April evening
I thought on the Lamb of God.

The lambs were weary and crying
With a weak human cry,
I thought on the Lamb of God
Going meekly to die.

KATHARINE TYNAN HINKSON

Up in the blue, blue mountains
Dewy pastures are sweet :
Rest for the little bodies,
Rest for the little feet.

Rest for the Lamb of God
Up on the hill-top green,
Only a cross of shame
Two stark crosses between.

All in the April evening,
April airs were abroad ;
I saw the sheep with their lambs,
And thought on the Lamb of God.

ROSE MACAULAY

178.

The Devourers

CAMBRIDGE town is a beleaguered city ;
For south and north, like a sea,
There beats on its gates, without haste or pity,
The downs and the fen country.

Cambridge towers, so old, so wise,
'They were builded but yesterday,
Watched by sleepy gray secret eyes
That smiled as at children's play.

Roads south of Cambridge run into the waste,
Where learning and lamps are not,
And the pale downs tumble, blind, chalk-faced,
And the brooding churches squat.

ROSE MACAULAY

Roads north of Cambridge march through a plain
Level like the traitor sea.
It will swallow its ships, and turn and smile again,
The insatiable fen country.

Lest the downs and the fens should eat Cambridge up,
And its towers be tossed and thrown,
And its rich wine drunk from its broken cup,
And its beauty no more known—

Let us come, you and I, where the roads run blind,
But beyond the transient city,
That our love, mingling with earth, may find
Her unperishable heart of pity.

SYLVIA LYND

179.

Hunting Song

THE hunt is up! the hunt is up!
It sounds from hill to hill,
It pierces to the hidden place
Where we are lying still;
And one of us the quarry is,
And one of us must go,
When through the arches of the wood
We hear the dread horn blow.

A huntsman bold is Master Death,
And reckless doth he ride,
And terror's hounds with bleeding fangs
Go baying at his side;

SYLVIA LYND

And will it be a milk-white doe,
A little dappled fawn,
Or will it be an antlered stag
Must face the icy dawn ?

Or will it be a golden fox
Must leap from out his lair,
Or where the trailing shadows pass
A merry romping hare ?
The hunt is up, the horn is loud
By plain and covert side,
And we must run alone, alone,
When Death abroad doth ride.

But idlé 'tis to crouch in fear,
Since death will find you out ;
Then up and hold your head erect,
And pace the wood about,
And swim the stream, and leap the wall,
And race the starry mead,
Nor feel the bright teeth in your flank
Till they be there indeed.

For in the secret hearts of men
Are peace and joy at one.
There is a pleasant land where stalks
No darkness in the sun,
And through the arches of the wood
Do break, like silver foam,
Young laughter, and the noise of flutes,
And voices singing home.

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